

Window on Jordan

By Claire Younger
Star Staff Writer

YOU KNOW it's hot when the office engineer actually enjoys getting soaked by the leaky air-conditioning. Not everybody is as good-humored about the current hot weather as the air-conditioning engineer, however. As the temperature rises, some people get really crabby. Combine a heat wave with a shortage of drinking water and you're really in for some fun!

The Civil Defense Dept., this week advised citizens to keep children indoors between 11am and 4pm. Sensible advice. But what about

adults? Seems to me that adults are the ones who really need to take heed of this warning. Hospitals have been inundated with cases of sunstroke, mainly from construction workers who often spend the whole day toiling in the blazing sun. Out and about, people have been spotted wandering around in a daze or walking out in front of cars. I won't even begin to tell you about the driving I've seen this week!

It's not just in Jordan, of course. All over the world, sudden weather change, and especially heat waves, definitely lead to irrational human behavior. In Britain, long hot summers are rare.

Perhaps because of this, public warnings are issued yearly telling people not to go and lie in the sun for long periods in case they burn. Without fail, every summer, emergency wards are cluttered with blistered, pink, lobster-like individuals, who just couldn't resist the urge to tan.

In Munich, Germany, a peculiar warm wind that blows from the Alps even in winter! causes people to do weird and wonderful things. The strangest thing about this weather phenomenon

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The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

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Supplément en français du Star

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اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

Press freedom at the mercy of the Upper House

By Raed Al Abed
Star Staff Writer

THE PRESS received a heavy blow when the people's representatives passed the government draft press law, having made only a small number of amendments which failed to alter its martial tone.

The peoples' deputies deserted their voters by passing the heavily criticized draft press law. The ratified law even means that no printed material is safe from government interference—even the good old ordinary note-book owned by the shopkeeper is not safe!

The Lower House deputies chose not to act upon a number of substantial draft amendments made by the House's National Guidance Committee. Some of its members flagrantly went back on their word.

At the end of the session last Sunday, another anomaly occurred, when 32 deputies suddenly disappeared—just before the final vote. The House passed the law with a majority of 38 voting in favor, only 10 deputies

the government's draft law and produce new democratic legislation more in line with the 21st century.

Although fines under the current law have been significantly reduced from the original draft, Article 47 calls for fines as high as JD 10,000. Repeat offenders of these and other provisions of the bill are required to pay an amount double that of the initial fine.

The law contains many articles that grant authorities sweeping powers of censor,

Ensour, who is also a Minister of Information, added that the law is an important step for the freedom of the press. He stressed, "it ended the executive's authority over the media."

However, journalists—who will be most affected by the law—think otherwise.

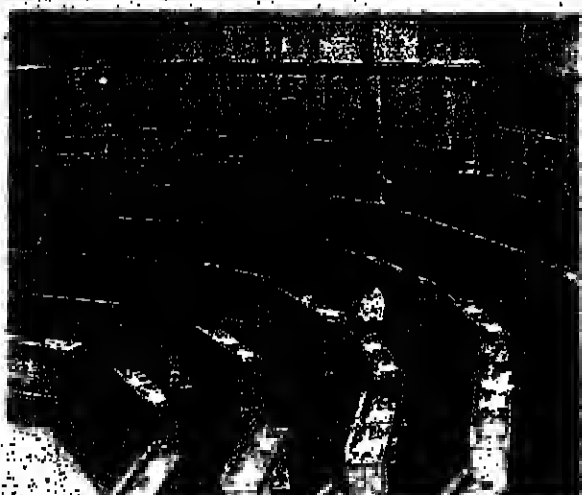
"The House ratified a law that aims at destroying the press in our country," said Jamal, Shawahneh, editor-in-chief of *Al Badal* weekly. "The penalties and fines ratified in

the law do not comply with a free press, nor does it allow an independent Fourth Estate."

Ironically, the law reduces the authority of the director of the Press and Publication Dept. (PPD). However, it handed those powers to the Minister of Information.

Observers say it is simply changing hats.

Article 37 imposes outright taboos—among which are the publication of anything that



Empty seats. Many deputies suddenly disappeared from the chamber minutes before the final vote on the press law

extreme fines, and the power to suspend newspapers found to be in violation of a variety of vaguely worded taboos.

"Concomitant to their promises, the Lower House has not ratified a civilized press law," said Dr. Nabil El Sharif, editor-in-chief of *Ad Dastour* Arabic daily. El Sharif described the day that law was endorsed by the House as a "black day."

He pointed out that "the law contains vaguely worded prohibitions, that have many interpretations."

The House's endorsement of the law which will now go to the Upper House for further debate, pleased the government. Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour described it as "a victory for the press."

"offends religious, guaranteed by the constitution," "infringes on the independence of the judiciary," "offends national unity and incites hatred," "defames the heads of Arab, Islamic, or friendly states," contains "false rumors," discloses "state documents protected by the law," and disseminates information on deviation or moral corruption."

Other taboos include publication of anything that "harms the dignity, personal freedom or reputation of individuals," or includes information about "parliamentary sessions," or that "shakes confidence in the national currency," or which "instigates strikes, sit-ins, or

People preferred to stay at home, discussing the two main topics of the week—the water crisis and the unbelievable high temperatures. At night, people cooled off on the roofs of their homes, or in public parks, and children bathed themselves in fountains to cool down.

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A man and his children sit in their decorated car, bedecked with flowers and a portrait of His Majesty King Hussein, as they celebrate the 46th anniversary of King Hussein's rule in downtown Amman, 11 August.

If you can't stand the heat, then stay in the kitchen

By Ibtisam Awadat
Star Staff Writer

LAST WEEK, Amman took on the appearance of a ghost town, following record high temperatures. From dawn till dusk, most of the streets were deserted; those pedestrians who did venture out made sure that they chose the shortest route to their destination, whilst the only cars on the streets were air-conditioned ones.

The last time Jordan experienced a heat wave like this was 66 years ago. Weather experts said that it was the longest heat wave in the nation's history. "For more than 25 days, Jordan can into harsh weather conditions resulting from the south-eastern winds," said Dr. Ali Abanda, former director of the Meteorology Dept., (MD).

The source of the winds came from the Indian subcontinent. "These winds passed through the Arab Peninsula, the Gulf region, Iraq, Turkey and finally to Greece, before making its way back to Jordan," Dr. Abanda told *The Star*. Temperatures in these countries were higher than those registered in Jordan, since they were directly affected by the wave.

"Temperatures in Amman reached 42 degrees centigrade following a monsoon depression from the north of the Arab Peninsula," Abanda concluded. "Whilst the lower regions in the country, like the Jordan Valley, registered more than 46 degrees centigrade."

Dr. Hussein Shafa-Amri, director of the Climate Change Department at the Foundation for General Environmental Protection (FGEPE), provided another explanation for the rise in temperatures. "Two theories are available concerning the heat wave. The first could be a normal cycle of nature, while the second analysis could be the beginning of the Nino phenomenon in the region," Shafa-Amri added.

These scientific interpretations and the information published by the MD, has pushed concerned parties to outline precautionary procedures, to prevent illness and death from over exposure to the sun. Concerned authorities advised citizens—especially those working

outdoors for long periods—to cover up, wear a hat, and to keep in the shade as much as possible.

The Civil Defense Directorate (CDD) has been very active over the last few days.

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Iraq has crippled weapons probe, Agency finds

By Craig Turner

UNITED NATIONS—Iraq's refusal to cooperate with UN arms inspectors has crippled the international investigation of Baghdad's nuclear weapons program and increased the chance that Iraq could resume atomic bomb development without detection, officials reported this week.

The disclosure was included in a letter to the president of the Security Council from Mohammed Baradei, director of the Vienna, Austria-based International Atomic Energy Agency, the UN affiliate that is in charge of the nuclear inspection program in Iraq.

The finding undermines the agency's previous assurances that it could find no evidence that Iraq had resumed nuclear weapons research that had been disrupted and destroyed during the 1991 Gulf War. Now, the letter said, the agency has "a significantly reduced level of assurance" in that conclusion because it does not have the access it needs to conduct inspections.

Baradei's declaration also is likely to increase diplomatic pressure on Iraq to roll back an

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Big Brother is sitting on a pile of gold

By Joe Rogaly

REGULATION ON data protection may collapse under a weight of greed. That's why a First Law of Robotics is welcome.

Call us quaint, but some of us shiver a little when a perfect stranger tells us our home address: "Name?" asks the screen jockey at the other end of the line. "Postcode?" or, in the American language, "Zipcode?" As we mouth the last letter or digit we are treated to a smug confirmation of our house number, street, town and county.

It is on such occasions that you may be tempted to surrender your privacy, to tell all, even down to the improper websites you might inadvertently have visited. No need to confess. The browser you used has a list of your home page preferences in your "cookie" file, or in pre-Gates English, some computer somewhere has memorized what you and I look up, and when. Another hard disc or tape holds our medical records.

Others know when we used the telephone and who we called, our direct mail buying preferences, our income, outgoings and shareholdings, our marriages and divorces. Pay tax, collect social security, buy a lottery ticket, travel by air, breathe in, breathe out, it makes no difference. All is captured by electronic eye or hand.

This accretion of personal information could be an invincible weapon in the hands of a digital dictator, were it not for one saving factor.

The machines are fallible. They do not "join up" and when they do they go "wrong." This week, our bank mistakenly credited us with a sum large enough to buy a medium-sized family car. A real person had to write an apology, before clicking the money back to its true owner.

Alas, the inherent tendency of devices to foul up is not a sufficient protection for the individual. In the US, where self-regulation is the preferred mechanism, there has been much recent debate over a proposal to unify hospital records. It might enhance this or that citizen's health, but

could be subject to misuse by nosy parkers. In Britain, there is the Data Protection Act, strengthened and updated this year to conform with the European Union's authoritarian instincts. It lays down eight "Data Protection Principles," the first of which says that "the information to be contained in personal data shall be obtained, and personal data shall be processed, fairly and lawfully."

This sounds like the First Law of Robotics, promulgated by the science fiction writer Isaac Asimov. Remember? "A robot may not injure a human being..." Nevertheless many imagined automatons, particularly Hal in the film 2001: A Space Odyssey, have murdered their makers.

In the actual year 2001 we may see the British/European set of law-based directives collapse under the weight of greed. The latest annual report of Britain's Data Protection Registrar, published a fortnight ago, describes the growing web of rules, lists successful prosecutions of transgressors, and offers guidance on best practice.

It sounds like solid protection, of the sort the

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World
REPORT

ARAB BANK

is honoured to convey to

HIS MAJESTY KING HUSSEIN

and to the Jordanian people

its felicitations and most cordial wishes

on the anniversary of

HIS MAJESTY'S ACCESSION TO THE THRONE.



ARAB BANK

Press freedom at the mercy of the Upper House

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public gatherings in violation of the law."

Observers believe that such a statute gives the government carte blanche authority to punish journalists for writing anything they regard as critical or unfavorable.

"The performance of journalists will be mandatorily reversed by the articles of this law," said Raja Tallab, editor-in-chief of leading weekly *Shehan*. The law will "disable journalists' access to information, and their courage to publish controversial news. Following leads on corruption cases will be extremely difficult, and could prove very costly."

Several local and international human rights bodies, together with the majority of civic institutions, have appealed to the Lower House to consider a more civilized law. "However, despite all efforts, the House ratified a new law, best described as a punishment or martial law," said Dahli.

The editor-in-chief of *Al Arab* Al Youm daily, Taher Al Adwan, said the law "restricts the freedom of the press." He added that the Lower House should have considered the views of both the press and popular sectors.

A number of articles in the law empower authorities to censor any foreign publication entering the country. Article 34 states that distributors or print-

ers of foreign publications are required to deposit two copies of each publication to the PFD director prior to distribution, and the director has the power to ban a publication's distribution if its contents are judged to violate any provision of the law. Over the past year, dozens of issues of foreign newspapers, such as the London-based dailies *Al Hayat* and *Al Quds Al Arabi*, have been banned by the PFD for publishing coverage of Jordanian affairs that it deemed unfavorable.

Over the past five years, there have been dozens of cases where the authorities have employed similar provisions from the 1993 Press and Publications Law (PPL), and have dragged journalists to court for their critical coverage of sensitive political topics—such as alleged government corruption, Jordan's 1994 peace treaty with Israel, and the policies of fellow Arab states. According to press analyst Yahya Shogeer, however, the government severely applied the 1993 law on numerous occasions but it lost 90 percent of the cases it took to court.

"The executive branch of the government succeeded in influencing the outcome of the law greatly," El Sharif said. "Journalists should not surrender; it is not the end of the battle." He added that the democratic stance that His Majesty King Hussein hoped for, would con-

tinue to be their goal as well.

It looks like the government will never lose a case again. Article 50, authorizes the courts to indefinitely close down newspapers for publishing items the government believes are not in the "public interest" or which it deems a danger to "national security"—an ambiguous description that is subject to broad interpretation.

Article 51 also orders the automatic closure of any publication if it fails to bring itself in line with the articles of the press law within 90 days. And article 47 authorizes the court to suspend any publication that fails to pay any fine.

"There is direct interference with the judiciary," Dahli stressed. "Other articles also contradict articles of the Penal Code and the Constitution."

Other restrictions on the editorial freedom of journalists appear in Article 38, which authorizes absolute censorship of court proceedings and criminal investigations. It states that publications may not report on "what the investigative authorities or courts have been assigned to do if it influences the investigation, the court proceedings, or the status of the people involved."

Finally, Nedal Mansour, the editor-in-chief of *Al Hadeeth* weekly, commented, "The majority of deputies see the press as being the only problem facing Jordan today."

Nothing but a lot of hot air!

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enoo, however, is that lawyers in the city have been known to cite the *Foehn* wind as a defendant's reason for getting involved in an accident or for committing a petty crime! "But it was the wind, Your Honor!"

Amman, however, is experiencing its hottest week since 1932. It can't boast a *Foehn* wind, but it can boast a mean water crisis. Over at the Lower House, ministers and water experts have been bickered about the cause of the problem and, hopefully, have been sweating over a solution. Let's just hope that they haven't been trying to solve the nation's ills between the hours of 11am and 4pm—anything could happen!

Meanwhile, gazing at the air-conditioning dripping into a plastic bucket is obviously doing wonders for my imagination. I could swear I read a story just last week about people in Sydney complaining about the indignity of boiling their drinking water. Doo! they know that eaters are plentiful in the outback and that the sap is far more nutritious than silly old H2O? They're not really very resourceful, these Aussies, are they? I bet if they all came to Amman right now they wouldn't have the common sense to set up home in their refrigerators, would they?

What do you mean I must be delirious? ■



Big Brother is sitting on a pile of gold

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EU is demanding of the US if data is to flow freely across the Atlantic, but we may be permitted our disbelief. Information, particularly on individual characteristics and buying habits, e-prospectors will do whatever they can get away with.

So the growing tribe of professional criminals. In response to this, the police in several countries are turning the power of electronic databases against law-breakers. This is called "proactive" or "intelligence-led" crime fighting.

ing. I take these appellations from a report published this week by Jusdec, the British arm of the International Commission of Jurists.

Jusdec is concerned about the use of informers and undercover officers as well as "increasingly sophisticated aural and visual surveillance devices." It concludes that present law and practice is "out of date, and inconsistent." Intelligence-led detective work is fine and dandy, but the necessary safeguard clauses, defending privacy and human rights are not in place.

Do not jump to the conclusion that this is yet another whinge from a pack of hand-wringing liberal lawyers. The chairman of Jusdec is Lord Alexander, a distinguished banker. The working party that helped prepare the report contained some heavyweight legal brains. It included a senior police officer.

Most of its detailed proposals sound sensible to me. To take just one—it recommends a single law to regulate what in simpler days was called wiretapping. We are reminded of the US federal code, which covers the interception of all communications, "whether by wire, oral or electronic." It is legal, if you get a warrant first. "This approach," Jusdec notes, "overcomes the difficulty of legislative definitions falling behind technology."

In my view, the difficulty is probably insuperable. Technology flies ahead at ever-accelerating speed, law crawls behind a lethargic public opinion. In some moods we think why bother—let the snoopers snoop. We have nothing to hide. Yet we usually recover our optimism, start pushing that heavy rock up that slippery hill all over again. ■

Financial Times Syndication

Iron show at Kan Zaman

Under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Rahnema Bint Al Hassan, the Jordan Investments Company, Amman, is organizing an exhibition of wrought iron furniture by Jordanian artist Salim Al Baidat at Al Baidat Hall at the historic village of Kan Zaman from 17 August till 17 September. Jordan's old communal art is being on display. It includes beds, tables, shelves, wall units, desks, chairs, side lamps of various designs, and other items made of wrought iron, wood and straw.

King speaks out against negligence, defends transparency

AMMAN (Star)—His Majesty King Hussein assured the Jordanian people that his health is improving. In a telephone interview with Monte Carlo Radio, Tuesday, the King said, "My health today cannot be compared with when I arrived in the United States. I am a lot better, my doctors are optimistic, and my morale is high." The King pointed out that he was about to start the second session of chemotherapy, but reiterated that he is feeling much better.

In his interview, the monarch spoke about other domestic and external issues referring to the concept of democracy.

"When I talked about democracy I meant that it should not be regarded as a recipe but rather as an exercise. I believe the present situation is a reflection of what we have been experiencing recently."

King Hussein commented on the water contamination issue, the near collision of two jumbo-jets and of negligence at the Aqaba thermal plant.

"Recently we have come face to face with more than one incident, but God has protected us. I am talking about negligence and shirking of responsibility which is a sign that we are facing danger should the present situation be allowed to continue unchecked."

On the water issue, the King added, "Personally, I believe that, for example, since the water of Lake Tiberias is relatively still, and this is known through history, why have precautionary mea-

sures not been taken to avoid mishaps."

King Hussein was deeply disturbed by attempts to cover up these defects, saying "we should act with full transparency so that we can correct our mistakes. Those responsible for these mistakes must be punished to guarantee their errors are not repeated at the expense of the nation and the people, as to the water problem I believe we should not be lax in dealing with it."

He continued, "The water should be fresh and healthy and in its natural state, and anything less than that is absolutely unacceptable. Water resources are scarce and our problem are big but we have solutions, and I wonder why we do not deal with the problem. Why does such a problem not happen in other regions? The situation is totally unacceptable nor is it acceptable to see anyone covering it up."

In an answer to a question about Jordan's efforts to end the current stalemate in the peace negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis, the King replied, "In my view we are far behind what had to be achieved in the region in connection with the peace process. Peace cannot be achieved unless we are equals and a true desire for its establishment so that the future generations can benefit from it. It is not a matter of bargaining over small matters. This means that the issue at hand is far bigger, and its dangers are real. Those who speak in the language of war do not realize the meaning of war or the

value of humans, nor do they realize the consequences on the present and the future of people. This does not mean that the answer is in the hands of Israel and its government. We can try to achieve this objective through contact with the Israeli people and officials."

The King's latest illness and his medical condition has been interpreted differently by the Arab and foreign press. Some raised speculations about the future of the Kingdom after King Hussein. Reassuring people, inside and outside Jordan, the King stressed, "Quite honestly, I find all these speculations and nonsensical opinions expressed by some quite strange. These opinions are in fact groundless. To start with, no person is immortal. We live for the people and their future. We do not work with only the present in mind, but rather for the decades to come."

The King continued, "Secondly, the situation does not warrant such speculation. In fact, I have made it a point to inform people all over the world of the smallest details of my condition." This stems from my firm belief in transparency and in the fact that people have to appreciate that they are dealing with a mortal human being whose primary purpose in life is to serve them. So speculation or otherwise, the fact is that as far as the succession is concerned, it rests in the hands of my brother, whom I chose over others, many years ago, and who has shouldered his responsibilities and performed

For the Record

Prince Hamzeh visits Brunei

BRUNEI (Petra)—His Majesty King Hussein delegated His Royal Highness Prince Hamzeh Bin Al Hussein to take part in the main celebration held in the Sultanate of Brunei to appoint His Royal Highness Prince Al Muhtadi Billah, the son of His Majesty Sultan Hassan Bolkiah of Brunei, as the Crown Prince of Brunei. The Sultan of Brunei had earlier extended an invitation to His Majesty the King and other world leaders to take part in this celebration.

Arab Youth Festival EGYPT (Petra)—Jordan will take part in the 9th Arab Youth Festival scheduled to open in Alexandria on August 20, with the participation of young people from twenty Arab countries. The festival—the biggest Arab youth gathering—aims to maintain close cultural cooperation among the Arab youth, and to strengthen their pan-Arab national concepts. Egypt decided to host the festival after the United Arab Emirates withdrew its commitment.

Mordechai-Ross telephone call

USA (Petra)—Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai contacted US Middle East peace envoy Dennis Ross on the phone last week, and briefed him on the latest developments of the stalled peace negotiations between the Palestinians and Israel. The phone call came after Mordechai met separately with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and discussed with him new ideas to be put forward to the Palestinians on the second phase of the Israeli troop redeployment in the West Bank areas. Israeli Radio reported, any date for a Palestinian-Israeli meeting has not been fixed yet, despite the continuous phone calls between officials from the two sides. No breakthrough is expected during the coming few days.

Jordan-Morocco talks RABAT (Petra)—His Majesty King Hassan II of Morocco last night received His Majesty King Hussein's Adviser Salah Abu Zaid who delivered to him a message from the King. The Moroccan monarch wished His Majesty the King a speedy recovery and a safe return to continue his grand services to Jordan, and the Arab and Islamic world. Talks during the meeting focused on promoting brotherly relations between Jordan and Morocco.

Jordan and USA agreements

AMMAN (Petra)—The Jordanian and US governments on Monday signed two grant agreements with a value of \$54.3 million, aimed at supporting the Jordanian economy and future development, sources of the Ministry of Planning said. The first \$50 million grant is to support the economic reform program, within the framework of investment promotion and activating the trade sector, the sources said. The second \$4.3 million value agreement is expected to support special procedures through increasing economic opportunities for the Jordanians.

The total American contribution to Jordan in the field of increasing economic opportunities, following the signature of these two agreements, has reached \$124.8 million. This is from \$525 million already allocated for Jordan over the next few years.

Jerash Festival concludes JERASH (Petra)—Deputizing for Her Majesty Queen Noor, Senator Laila Sharaf on Saturday night put out the torch of Jerash Festival for Art and Culture announcing the conclusion of the festival which lasted about 20 days.

Director-General of the festival Akram Masarwah delivered a statement at the concluding ceremony in which he thanked all public and private institutions which contributed to the success of the festival. He said this year's festival included a wide variety of distinguished performances and presentations that satisfied all sectors of the community.

Sharaf distributed shields to excellent groups in appreciation of their effective participation in the festival.

Jordanian Ambassador/credentials

BAGHDAD (Petra)—Jordan's Ambassador to Iraq Hnoud Qatameh presented his credentials to the Iraqi Deputy President during a ceremony that was attended by the Iraqi Foreign Minister and members of the Jordanian mission in Baghdad. The ambassador discussed with the Iraqi officials bilateral ties as well as ways of promoting them for the common good of both countries.

Anani and Khatami discuss Jordanian-Iranian relations



Deputy Prime Minister Jawad Anani meeting Iranian President Muhammad Khatami

Amman, (Petra)—Jordanian-Iranian talks started on Saturday, to enhance political, economic and cultural relations between the two countries.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Jawad Anani, head of the Jordanian delegation, expressed the Jordanian leadership's desire to bolster relations with Iran, to fulfill a just, durable and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, which would guarantee the Palestinian people's right to establish their independent state on their national soil.

Anani stressed that both sides emphasized the necessity of keeping up the work of the Jerusalem Committee following its recent

meeting in Morocco, and of keeping Jerusalem a religious place in the Arab and Islamic world.

Regarding economic relations, Anani said the two sides discussed the prospect of joint investment in fertilizers, and increased trade exchange. Anani told reporters upon his arrival that the message he carries from His Majesty King Hussein to the Iranian President Muhammad Khatami is one of friendship and fraternity, expressing his hope that President Khatami would visit Jordan as soon as possible.

Finally, he stated that the visit to Iran is very important because it provides an opportunity to discuss all current political issues. ■

If you can't stand the heat, then stay in the kitchen

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calling on people—through all channels of the media—to avoid exposure to the sun, especially between the hours of 11 to 4 in the afternoon. "This year, we have handled more cases of sunstroke and heat exhaustion than ever before," said Lieutenant Ghassan Al Zoubi. However, the CDD declined to provide any statistics relating to the heat.

Hospitals verified the scale of the problem. "I deal with almost three sunstroke cases during my eight-hour shift," said Dr. Salim Qais, from the emergency department at the Zarga Public Hospital. Hundreds of patients frequented medical care centers throughout the Kingdom to receive treatment. The *Ad-Dustour* daily newspaper reported one death due to the heat wave, at a hospital in northern Ghore.

Every cloud has a silver lining, however. Sales of electric fans, refrigerators and air-



Heat wave! Young and old finding the sweltering temperatures all a bit much

conditioning units rose dramatically. Local mineral water suppliers also witnessed record sales, following the demand for extra water during the heat wave, and from the recent water pollution crisis. The Ministry of Supply also opened the door to imported mineral water. At the time of writing, the

country began to witness a slight decrease in temperature. Sources at the MD told *The Star* that the heat wave ended on Monday, and that temperatures have returned to normal for this time of the year. "Temperatures today (Thursday) will be 34 degrees centigrade—relatively hot weather,"

said Issa Batarseh, a forecaster at the MD. "However, people are requested to follow all the normal precautions, as temperatures are expected to rise to 36 degrees centigrade on Saturday—one degree centigrade above the seasonal average," Batarseh said. ■

JORDAN

W E E K



An unconventional
report on Jordanian
news and views edited
by Marwan Al Asmar

Mishaps

His Majesty King Hussein sent a letter early last week to His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, pointing to some cases highlighting the government's lack of accountability and transparency. The issue of contaminated water, which has led to the resignation of Minister of Water, Dr Munther Haddadin is of course one. Another two were the near collision of two jets because of negligence at Queen Alia International Airport. The King also pointed to the lack of continuous maintenance that almost caused a catastrophe at the Aqaba thermal station—it almost exploded, which would have cost the state JD364 million in repairs, not to mention the extensive loss of human life that could have occurred. The King stressed that we must all, government and people, abide by the principle of transparency and accountability to avoid similar mishaps in the future. Of course, transparency, the watchword of our democratic press, has become increasingly difficult lately.

Licking its wounds

The government continues to face much criticism over its handling of the water issue. Just the other day, a group of influential Jordanians said that the government should foot the water bill. Simply put, they are saying that the government should waver people's water rates in West Amman and the Balqa region for the months of June and July. They say the reasons are quite obvious. The water has been polluted, and people shouldn't be expected to pay for water which is (to put it mildly) below par. But will the government do this? It is feared they won't. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Industry allowed the importation of mineral water from outside the country in a bid to solve the water problem and to keep the tourists happy.

Nahed Hattar

Another strange thing happened this week. Nahed Hattar, the chief editor of *Al Mithaq*, was attacked in the presence of his wife and children by four unknown assailants, who were waiting for him in a taxi outside his home. One of them first asked him if he was Nahed Hattar, and after he confirmed his identity, he was surrounded by the four who set about beating him with clubs. The four escaped after his wife and on-lookers intervened. Hattar was taken to Lomella Hospital where he spent the night in the intensive care unit. The Arab Organization for Human Rights denounced the attack.

Laid to rest

Upper House Senator Ahmed Al Tarawneh was laid to rest earlier this week. He died at the age of 78. His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, paid his respects. He was buried in the Royal Cemeteries. Mr Tarawneh was an established public figure who held many ministerial appointments, including the position of Chief of the Royal Court. He was born in 1920 in Karak and attended schools in Karak and Salt, and then obtained a degree from one of the universities in Syria. He started his public life in 1942 in the judiciary, then became a deputy, a minister, a Deputy Prime Minister, and a Speaker of the Upper House, and finally the Chief of the Royal Court.

Olive oil

The importation of olive oil was stopped as of 11 August. Minister of Agriculture Mithqan Al-Khatib said the ban has been imposed to protect domestic production of olive oil and local farmers. Previously, Jordan imported olive oil from all over the world, but its biggest suppliers were Tunisia and Turkey. Concerning Jordan's imports from the West Bank and Gaza, the Minister said that the issue was still under consideration, but Jordan would allow the importation of olive oil as gifts for private customers. What he implied is that the Ministry wouldn't allow importation in commercial quantities. However, the issue is still under discussion. Jordan consumes up to 5000 tons of olive oil annually.

Jordanian prisoners in Israeli jails

The Minister of Interior could be in hot water again. His remarks earlier this week that there aren't any Jordanians in Israeli prisons was heavily criticized. The government had already recognized that there are 19 Jordanian prisoners held in Israeli jails. Jordan's Ambassador to Israel, Omar Al Rifai, is already on record as stating that there are indeed Jordanian prisoners held in Israeli jails. Spokesman of the Follow-up Committee for Jordanian Prisoners in Israeli Jails, Dr Atiah Freij, told *Al-Sabeel* that the Minister's comments are "unbelievable" and don't reflect the extent of government interest in the issue of prisoners.

State employment

Speaking in Jerash, Prime Minister Abdel Salam Majali said, "We shouldn't use the university degree as a means of getting a government job. He said there are 450,000 people presently on the state pay roll. This represents about 10 percent of the population."

Poverty

According to official statistics there are between 40,000—45,000 families who are categorized as living in "absolute poverty," and between 55,000 to 60,000 families who are living in "relative poverty." The government certainly has its work cut out for it.

Nsour holds press conference

AMMAN (Petra)—Deputy Prime Minister for Service Affairs and Minister of Information Abdullah Nsour on Monday said that His Majesty King Hussein is following up and is keen to tackle the various local issues. Dr Nsour, who was addressing the weekly Monday press conference, described the recent water crisis as a very grave error. He added that the inquiry committee formed last week came about from directives by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent. Responding to a question regarding the resignation of the Minister of Health, Dr Nsour said that it was connected with the results of the inquiry. Dr Nsour said that Prime Minister Abdel Salam Majali accepted the resignation of Minister of Water and Irrigation Munther Haddadin, adding that the resignation

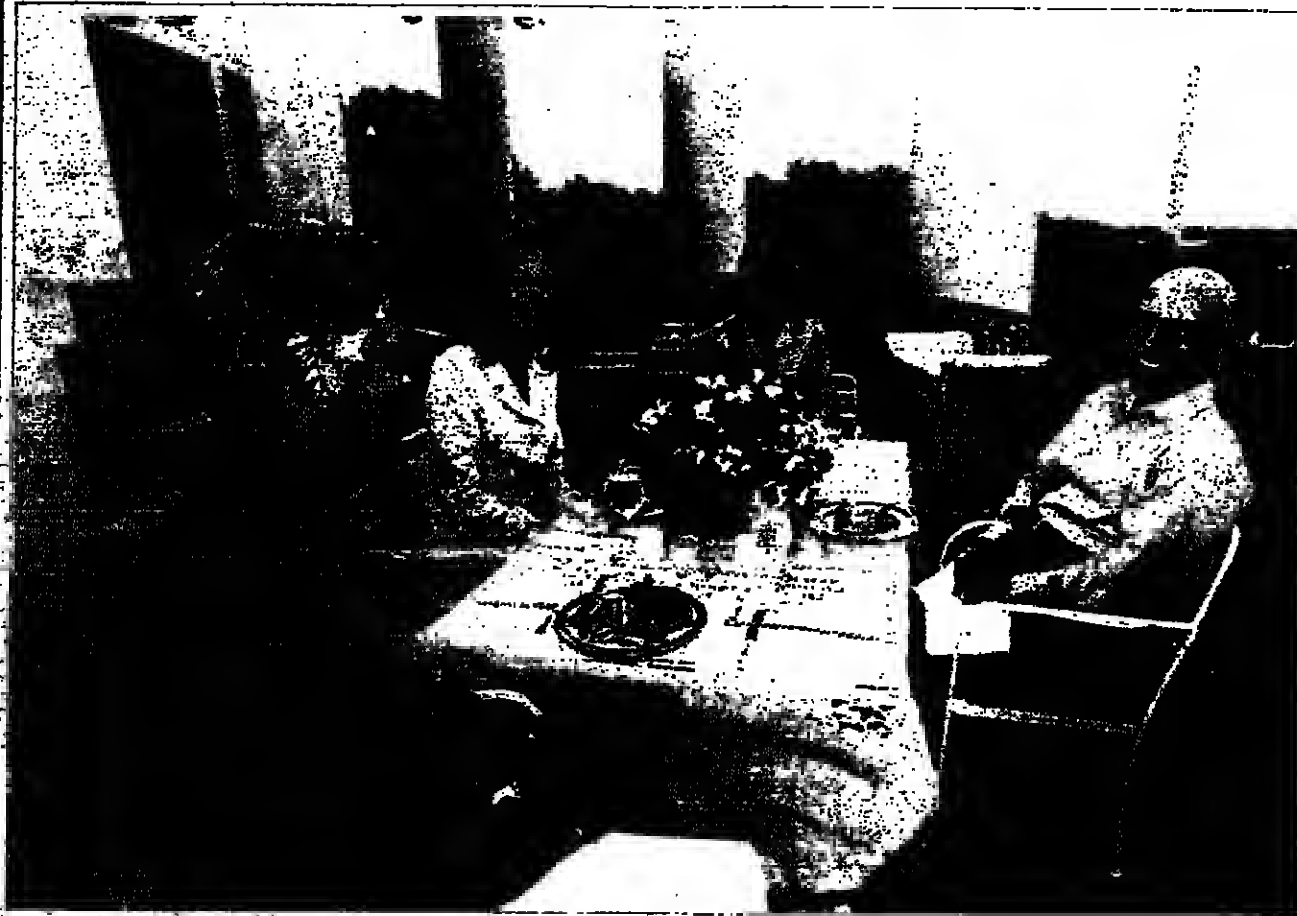
came in proper time. Responding to a question regarding negotiations on the Palestinian-Israeli track, Dr Nsour said that Jordan believes that the peace process is the only way forward, and expressed optimism in achieving results. Dr Nsour said that His Majesty King Hussein has saved no effort to support the Palestinian cause and the Palestinian National Authority in their negotiation with the Israelis. He highlighted also the constant contacts of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, between the two sides, in order to achieve an agreement. "Jordan supports the necessity of achieving a reasonable agreement accepted by both parties," Dr Nsour said.

Regarding Deputy Prime Minister for Development Affairs and Minister of Foreign Affairs Jawad Anani's

visit to Iran, Dr Nsour stressed that Jordan is seeking to develop relations with Iran to serve the interests of both countries as well as for the region, despite differences of opinion.

Dr Nsour urged people all over the world not to allow the escalation of confrontation between Iraq and the UN, mainly as it would be the Iraqi people who would pay the price of such a confrontation. "Jordan is against any military or non-military confrontation between Iraq and the UN or USA," Dr Nsour said.

Finally, Dr Nsour expressed Jordan's condemnation of the explosions at the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania stating that Jordan condemns and rejects violence, from any source for whatever cause, as Islam and Arabism rejects such bloody actions.



US President Bill Clinton and Mrs Clinton held a dinner banquet last night in Washington in honor of Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor. Doctors at the Mayo Clinic have given His Majesty a "leave" from the Clinic where he has been undergoing treatment since 1-4 July. The King left for a few days rest in Washington D.C.

Women fight for their place in the male-dominated labor market

By Ibtisam Awadat
Star Staff Writer

"THEY LIKE me but only under one condition: to stay a pussycat, they even advised me not to argue, just to listen and keep my professional views away from the office, since they claim to understand better than I do," Rania, a planning engineer said.

Unfortunately, Rania, 25, found herself obliged to defend her feminism. She is the only female in a workshop at a hotel which is still under construction.

"Finding yourself amongst 300 male workers and 10 male engineers, is certainly not to be envied," she stressed. "The stereotype about women influencing the minds of men, that the woman is fragile whose place is in the home to produce children, still very much exists, it has not progressed," Rania added.

Iman Al Nimri, a research coordinator at the Princess Basma Center for Women Affairs, said male employers believe that women don't want to hold leading positions. "According to some employers, women refuse to work extra hours since they have limited ambition." But Al Nimri believes differently. She said that it is outdated traditions that block the progress of women in achieving leading positions in society.

Celebrating the International Women's Day, last 8th March, the Center sponsored a workshop which brought together women and men to talk about the difficulties which encounter professional women from more involvement in society.

Men readily admit that "having a female boss is not yet acceptable," Nimri added.

A study by the Princess Basma Center shows that women's participation in the different labor sectors has particularly increased in low administrative jobs.

The same study, which covers 118 Jordanian establishments, shows that the percentage of women that have acquired leading positions in their fields is only one woman per 1000 men. These figures prove that women are not competing for leading positions.

Nimri explained. Furthermore, the study added that working women form only 23 percent of the active manpower of the samples.

Since the 1950s Jordanian women have been struggling to gain a respectable proportion of the male-dominated labor market. At that time, the only jobs that were available for women was to become school teachers.

"After more than 40 years of strife to find a place for her in society as an independent and capable individual, women have gained some achievements, however, their ambitions is yet to be fulfilled," said Dr Amal Al Sabagh, secretary general of the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW).

According to statistics on Jordanian women, searched and published by the JNCW, the unemployment rate among females is 19.8 percent. "The number of working women is still low especially in civic institutions and the decision-making arenas," said Dr Sabagh.

The indicators show that the female labor force (15 year old and above) occupy only 13.6 percent, while self-employed women constitute 5.5 percent.

And women suffer from low



Women are considered better qualified to do certain jobs, but many find it hard to enter professions traditionally only open to men.

More and more women are not content to be stay-at-home wives, but many of those that do find work still face gender prejudice in the workplace. This is also reflected in the fact that women employees are often paid far less for doing the same job as their male colleagues.



wages compared to those given to their male counterparts for doing the same tasks.

"Why does my male colleague take JD 120 per month, while I receive only JD 70 for the same job," asks a woman worker in one of the factories, who preferred to remain anonymous. "This is injustice," she complained. "I made up my mind several times to quit the job, but my harsh economic condition always forces me to back down," she bitterly said.

But women are not giving up. Today, they are penetrating the "male-closed" careers. It has become normal to find women actively involved in the industry, in different economic activities, politics and more recently the technical sector.

Most of the local companies that are licensed to manufacture television sets, radios, washing machines are opening the door wide for women. "We have 25-30 women working in the factory, 10 of them work on the boards of sophisticated machines which need a high degree of accuracy," said Hameed Takroui an official in Gold Star Company.

The number of women even at this national factory vary according to their skills. "In one of the production lines, the administration of the factory preferred to hire women instead of men especially because the products manufactured need patience and a gentle touch," he said.

Munther Haddadin A political scapegoat



By Raed Al Abed
Star Staff Writer

DURING THE live talk show "Frankly from Amman" last Saturday, a Jordanian citizen living in Saudi Arabia called for the resignation of Minister of Water and Irrigation, Munther Haddadin, for "being responsible" for the water crisis. However, the Minister smiled and assured the caller that the country's water is clean. He then told the caller in a gloomy manner that "it would be illogical" for him to resign.

Surprisingly, the next morning Haddadin did indeed quit his job. On Sunday, he offered his resignation to Prime Minister Dr Abdel Salam Majali. The Minister said in his resignation letter that "the situation engulfing my service has become difficult, and I do not want it to negatively affect the accomplishments of the Ministry of Water." On Monday, a Royal Decree was released approving his resignation.

But did Haddadin voluntarily submit his resignation or was he asked to resign? There is a big difference between both scenarios, and we need to know the answer. The precedent is there. Dr Haddadin was asked to resign 11 years ago, when he was a director-general of the Jordan Valley Authority. He was at the time accused of being responsible for water pollution.

Back then there was no 'Ministry of Water', but a 'Water Authority', which was responsible for drinking water, and a 'Jordan Valley Authority' responsible for pumping water from the King Abdullah Canal to the Zai Water Treatment Plant, for east Amman and its surrounding areas. (The Zai Plant was built to treat current surface water only, not stagnant water (from lakes etc.), mainly because Jordan does not possess much of this source).

At that time, Amman suffered from an acute water shortage. Residents in east Amman only received water pumped from the King Abdullah Canal to the Zai Plant. And as a result, the authorities decided to start pumping water from the King Talal Dam (stagnant water) into the King Abdullah Canal. This solved the quantity problem, but complaints soon resurfaced—this time over quality—as households quickly began complaining about the water's awful color and bad smell. An investigation committee was formed by the Minister of Health, which discovered that the algae found at the Zai Plant came from the King Talal Dam. The committee submitted its report to Mr Zaid Al Refa'i, the premier at that time. The next morning both water officials, Haddadin and Mohamed Kilani director-general of the Water Authority, joined the Cabinet session. Despite the fact that both denied that there was any pollution, and refused to discuss the investigative committee report, the prime minister asked them to resign.

A little more than a year after his appointment as Minister of Water and Irrigation—combining both the Water Authority and the Jordan Valley Authority—Haddadin faced a new crisis. This time the source of polluted water came from the south of Lake Tiberias—the so-called 'peace water'. Amman residents, faced with a water shortage again, demanded action, and the subject of water rights with neighboring Israel was soon on the agenda. More than two years after signing the Jordan-Israel peace treaty, Amman gained an additional 45 million cubic meters of 'peace water'. On Sunday a Lower House joint committee put the blame for the water pollution on the government. The committee's report stated that the bad quality water originated from Lake Tiberias: water that is overloaded with algae and organic materials—water that the aging treatment plant could not purify.

It was Haddadin who led the Jordanian team that negotiated with the Israelis over water. He gave his counterpart a hard time, was tough, and returned a hero for regaining Jordan's "full water rights."

However, many water experts expressed reservations over the Tiberias's water, saying it was raw, stagnant and polluted. Some farmers in the Jordan valley even refused this water for irrigation.

But why did Jordan accept this 'dirty water'? At that time, Jordan was facing rising opposition to the Jordan-Israel peace treaty, and the government needed urgent political gain to appease the public. When the water shortage problem rose to its head again, 'peace water' seemed the ideal solution—killing two birds with one stone. Ultimately, and with the benefit of hindsight, Haddadin was defeated by his own victory.

Both Haddadin's resignations have been over water. The latest resignation, however, stirs up a number of unanswered questions. Press reports have been discussing the likelihood that the government is fighting for its life and that Haddadin has been made a scape-goat following a number of grave mistakes committed by the government—one of which is the water issue, the other the dispute with the World Bank/IMF over the misleading economic growth rate figures.

The government's continued denial of a water pollution problem has inflamed public opinion even further, especially since independent reports, like the Lower House report and the US Stanley Consultant report, suggested otherwise. Sources said that it was only concern for the King's health that was delaying the resignation of the Majali team.

Haddadin's resignation has not solved the water crisis, but it has prolonged the life of the government—perhaps just long enough to ensure face-saving. However, a new government could still be on the agenda, once the storm has calmed.

The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

Online

<http://star.arabia.com>

Lurie's NewsCartoon



Our Say...

Accountability is needed

THE PUBLIC outcry against those responsible for pumping contaminated water to Amman's residential areas has reached its climax this week, with the resignation of Minister of Water Munthir Haddadin. His Majesty King Hussein called for an investigation into the issue—which put Jordanian lives at risk—and for making accountable those who failed to carry out their responsibilities.

The government has been caught in the vortex of this crucial issue, which has created public panic and has damaged Jordan's credibility abroad. The resignation of the water minister should not be the end of the matter. An independent probe must be launched and its findings made public.

In his letter to Crown Prince Hassan the Regent, last week, the King expressed his dismay at repeated incidents and mishaps as a result of negligence by officials. The Jordanian public shares His Majesty's dismay, since responsibility and authority cannot be detached from accountability.

Jordan's endemic water crisis has been worsening in the past few years, as demand for this strategic resource continues to increase. In addition to building dams and water reservoirs, the peace treaty with Israel promised Jordan a supply of badly needed water from Lake Tiberias to meet the country's dire water shortages, especially in the summer.

While Jordanians await the result of the official probe into the cause of the contamination in their drinking water, there are indications that water pumped by Israel was unfit for human consumption. Independent reports and tests have shown that officials at the pumping stations knew that water coming from Tiberias had high rates of organic matter, harmful to humans. The government has failed to deal with this issue clearly and responsibly. Its statements were contradictory and unconvincing and there is now every reason to believe that some officials wanted to cover up the mess and pretend that the crisis did not exist.

The press played an important part in exposing wrong-doing and negligence by officials. This is a shining example of what a free and responsible press can do to protect public interest. Sadly, this important achievement is marred by the adoption, this week, of a new press law that imposes vague and harsh restrictions on the Jordanian press.

The water crisis and scores of other issues point to an embedded mismanagement practices by the government. The economic issue and the controversy over the false growth rates computed by the government are additional examples. There is a need to review these major blunders with the hope of reforming the government so, that it becomes transparent and accountable—something that would protect the public from the transgressions of the past few weeks.



A US marine and his dog stand guard at the bomb damaged American embassy in Nairobi, August 10. The death toll from the bomb blast which tore through the heart of Kenya's capital on Friday has risen to 234, the presidential office said in a statement on Monday.

Reuters

Transparency and double-speak

By Dr Nabil El-Sharif

THE MOST often-quoted catchword of our government officials nowadays is 'transparency'. They boast about their 'transparency' in conducting their official business. They refer to the fact they can never go wrong in their undertaking of public duties, because they are 'transparent' in everything they do!

Reality, however, is far from their public claims. The overwhelming majority of government decisions, actions, successes and failures are conducted in absolute secrecy. The government drafted the new press law in total secrecy and refused to discuss any of its articles with anybody. And when it finished drafting the law, it refused to let anyone see it. When members of the Jordanian Press Association's Council were invited to have a look at the draft press law, they were asked not to tell anyone they saw it. Taking a copy home was unthinkable and publishing anything about it was deemed unpatriotic!

The greatest irony of this double-speak about 'transparency' happened when Jordan signed its peace treaty with Israel. Journalists were fervently looking for any information about the treaty we signed with Israel. They were motivated by their professional conviction that it was the people's right to know the kind of treaty we

Eye on Jordan



were signing with Israel, as it would affect our lives forever. No official was willing to share his copy of the peace treaty with the people via the press, because they felt that the copies belonged to them personally! The next day all newspapers carried the full text of the peace treaty with Israel but, regrettably, their sources were Israeli newspapers!

When the situation in Ma'an got out of hand in 1998, there was no official word of what was going on. All Jordanians found themselves completely reliant on our friend and colleague Randa Habib, who was telling them—sometimes in live broadcasts from Ma'an—what was actually happening on Radio Monte Carlo.

Jordanians found themselves in a very awkward situation: if they wanted to find out what was going on in southern Jordan, they had to listen to a station that was

transmitting from southern France!

The latest episode to showcase the government's double-speak on transparency happened last week, when His Majesty King Hussein revealed in a letter to His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, two catastrophes that nearly happened earlier this year due to human error and negligence. Two jumbo jets almost collided over Amman because all the traffic controllers were absent from their screens, performing prayers! Secondly, the Aqaba thermal plant was also about to explode because steam pressure in one of the boilers rose, unchecked, above acceptable levels.

For many citizens watching the text of His Majesty's letter on their television screens, these two revelations came as a total surprise. Their 'transparent' government had never told them that their lives were in danger as a result of these two major incidents.

One cannot help but wonder what else is still being kept a secret? Have we heard all we need to hear about, say, the problem of water? Will an upcoming statement by His Majesty The King reveal another example of life-threatening negligence, while our government continues to give us more lip-service about 'transparency'?

Water Crisis

Ever had a feeling of deja-vu?

By Jihad Abdullah

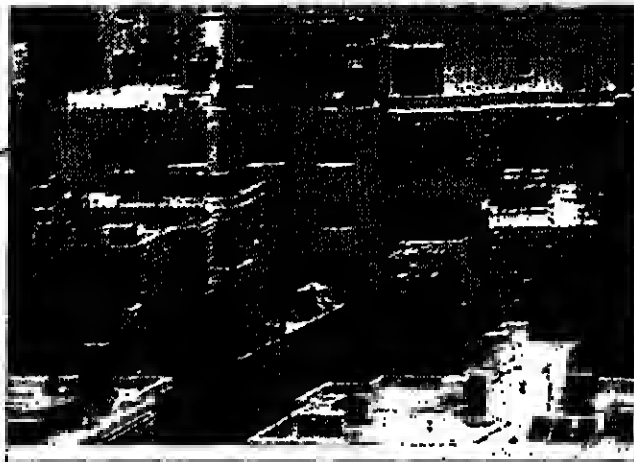
LOOKING TO the past to understand or improve recent trends in technology in the Arab world is not always worthwhile. For example, you don't need a historic explanation to understand the current water quality dilemma in Jordan. That's because you should have forgotten by now that the just resigned Minister of Water and Irrigation lost his last governmental post as Head of the Jordan Valley Authority along with the Head of Water Authority way back in 1988, as the result of a similar water problem in Western Amman at the time!

Why do I remind you of this? After all, wasn't it the Israeli's fault for pumping polluted water into Jordanian taps? I'm not saying that simply to have a dig at the Israelis either. Rather to point out that it is simplistic to blame Israel for all our problems, least of all the latest water crisis.

Being a chemist by profession, and with some experience in environmental analytical chemistry, I was amazed to discover that the only national standard for drinking water that we have is a comparison, not of tap water, but of bottled water. Quality is the key issue here.

In 1988 in Irbid (north) you got a white layer of bicarbonate floating on the water when you boiled it. According to an ex-mayor of the city, this was actually good for the health. So what's new about the current water dilemma? Nothing! We are actually facing exactly the same problem with our tap water that we did in 1988. Then, no measures were taken to prevent it from happening again.

There is obviously a clear problem of very low levels of



In-house water storage is a popular source of water pollution in Jordan.

quality control, assessment and assurance procedures. If there was a strict quality monitoring system, poor quality water would not be allowed through the supply.

To remedy this situation we should not be referring to agreements with Israel, but to the Water Authority and the Minister of Water! Surface water can not be used for drinking without treatment, even in countries with large supplies. It should only be used after a multi stage strict purification procedure.

Where does surface water come from? It is the water pumped to Amman, by Israel. A government spokesman will tell you that this is the only option we have, but this is not actually correct. We have plenty of underground water resources, which we allowed Israel to use, instead of supplying it to our own people. I refer to the Dési underground basin. It's a high price to pay if a peace agreement allows the other party to drink up your own national resources and prevent your

own people from taking advantage! What kind of agreement was that, Dr. Haddadin?

This is not the only quality problem related to drinking water in Jordan, however. Another serious problem is the method used to treat biological germs and bacteria in water. Jordan Water Authority (JWA) uses chlorination to do this, which is an outdated method. The danger comes from the fact that chlorinated molecules can interact with bio particles and/or organic molecules present in the water matrix, especially when it is stored, which explains why we do not like the taste of water when it has been stored for a long while in metal containers.

Jordanian private sector water providers use a new method to treat these germs using ozone instead of chlorine and it is much safer. Jordan, however, is the only country in the region that does not officially use this system. Chlorination as a treatment is also highly dangerous if levels are accidentally increased.

The government must, of course take responsibility for these problems, and citizens must be taught how best to store water in-house. Most Jordanian families use metal containers for water storage, especially during the summer when the periodic water delivery program starts. Unfortunately, there are no measures to ensure these containers are both manufactured and used hygienically or properly. No government body is following the way these containers are made, nor how people use them in their houses. Consequently many families are drinking unclean water and are unaware of the problem. It is essential to implement a strict control procedures on the manufacture of water containers, throughout Amman, except in the western part of the city where people usually use the safer fiber glass containers.

I am not an opposition MP, but I believe it is a government's responsibility to protect the safety and health of its citizens. This is the basic role of every government... or does our government have a different idea?

There is a good side to the current dilemma. No, not just the possibility of a cabinet reshuffle, but that the issue of Jordan's water quality (or lack of it) is now out in the open and will have to be dealt with. What's the alternative? Buying bottled water? I don't think so—has anyone gone to their labs lately to check how accurate their quality tests are?

Jihad Abdullah is a technology media consultant. E-mail: jihad_abdullah@TechnoArabia.com

Revolution and reform

MR ARAFAT seems to be presiding over a state of balanced, and well modulated dissatisfaction. The move from a state of revolution to 'reformulation' is coming up against problems. Some of those are due to 'exogenous' circumstances beyond Mr Arafat's control, but many others are of his own making.

The deteriorating living standards in PNA areas are a great cause of concern, because of the potential for social instability, and the drift towards extremism by young people who are increasingly finding little to lose in living, but plenty to gain in the hereafter by a martyr's death.

Graft, which permeates all levels of the PNA's bureaucracy, is neither a secret nor propaganda play—it is in evidence in the PNA's National Legislative Council, and reported by the international media. However, there has been no cosmetic attempts to deal with this, only ministers who have expressed despair in their attempts to fight corruption, and point the finger at higher authorities for interfering in their work to bring prosecutions.

Human rights and freedom of expression have been abused randomly, generating suspicion and apprehension. The administration is composed of Mr Arafat's ardent supporters—everyone has the right to rely on his supporters. However, Mr Arafat is not a chairman of an organisation—as he wants to be seen—but the president of a future Palestinian state.

He ought to widen the support base for these policies, and work on eradicating the suspicion among the young and educated who are increasingly alienated. The PNAs 'old guard' has served Mr Arafat well in the battle fields, and in the war of liberation, what remains now is a role for the civilian generals of peace and reconstruction.

This 'old guard' issue is not discussed very often for fear of highlighting the fact that Mr Arafat is an 'old guard' himself. No one in the Palestinian leadership has ever claimed legitimacy over the Palestinians. It is doubtful that any will have enough legitimacy, without Mr Arafat to pursue a final settlement with Israel.

Though there are real difficulties on the Palestinian-Israeli peace track, with appalling consequences on living conditions, Mr Arafat must approach the whole issue in a comprehensive manner. He must tackle all the difficulties encountered with the same sense of urgency, rather than leave issues to piecemeal solutions, which only create more problems while he is trying to solve others.

Confidence in the management of the Palestinian areas must be restored with the same energy of pursuing the peace process. There must be a multi-tracked approach in attempting to solve the daily problems of the people.

Peace is not an exclusive issue related only to reaching agreements with Israel—it must be pursued on the Palestinian home front. Ideally, if all other groups in the PLO currently residing outside the PNA areas contribute to the period of reconstruction, a more representative system can evolve. If this is not possible for the time being, at least serious dialogue should be undertaken with Hamas to limit differences.

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The Sultan of Brunei Hassanal Bolkiah (L) looks on as his eldest son Prince Al-Muhtadee Billah (C) greets the queen, Hajjah Maniam during the proclamation ceremony at Istana Nurul Iman in Bandar Seri Begawan August 10. Prince Al-Muhtadee becomes next in line to be the 30th ruler of the tiny sultanate on Borneo island in one of the last surviving absolute monarchies.



Reuters

Business scene

Jordan and the United States signed a \$50 million loan agreement, the last financial aid to be donated to Jordan this year. American aid to the Kingdom was increased for 1998 to \$225 million to finance water projects, the package of social security, provide for new job opportunities for Jordanians and to repay debts.

The market value of companies listed at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) registered a decline of JD 180 million last June from JD 3.985 billion at the end of May to JD 3.805 billion in June. However, the book value of these companies rose from JD 2.403 billion at the end of May to JD 2.425 billion at the end of June, an increase of JD 22 million. Sources at AFM said that the drop in the market value of banks also fell from JD 2.527 billion in May to JD 2.410 billion in June, a fall of JD 117 million. But the book value of banks and financial firms went up from JD 1.264 billion in May to JD 1.272 billion by the end of June. On the contrary, the market value of industrial companies recorded a rise of JD 10 million to reach JD 1.130 billion at the end of June, whereas the book value of these companies reached JD 916.3 million. In addition, the value of the services and insurance companies rose from JD 1.130 billion in May to JD 1.137 billion in June.

Purchasing contracts made by non-Jordanian investors at Amman Financial Market (AFM) and foreign totaled JD 28.5 million last June, up from JD 22.1 million last year. They were JD 12.8 million against JD 0.8 million in June last year. Net non-Jordanian investment since the beginning of the year to June is estimated at JD 37.7 million compared with JD 39.8 million in the first half of last year.

Foreign Exchange

Wednesday, 12 August

| | Buy JD | Sell JD |
|------|--------|---------|
| US\$ | 0.7080 | 0.7180 |
| £ | 1.1510 | 1.1568 |
| DM | 0.4124 | 0.4145 |
| SEK | 0.4801 | 0.4825 |
| FRF | 0.1227 | 0.1233 |
| YEN | 0.5624 | 0.5652 |
| DM | 0.3667 | 0.3685 |
| ITL | 0.0419 | 0.0421 |

Importing via Haifa seen as a real threat to Aqaba

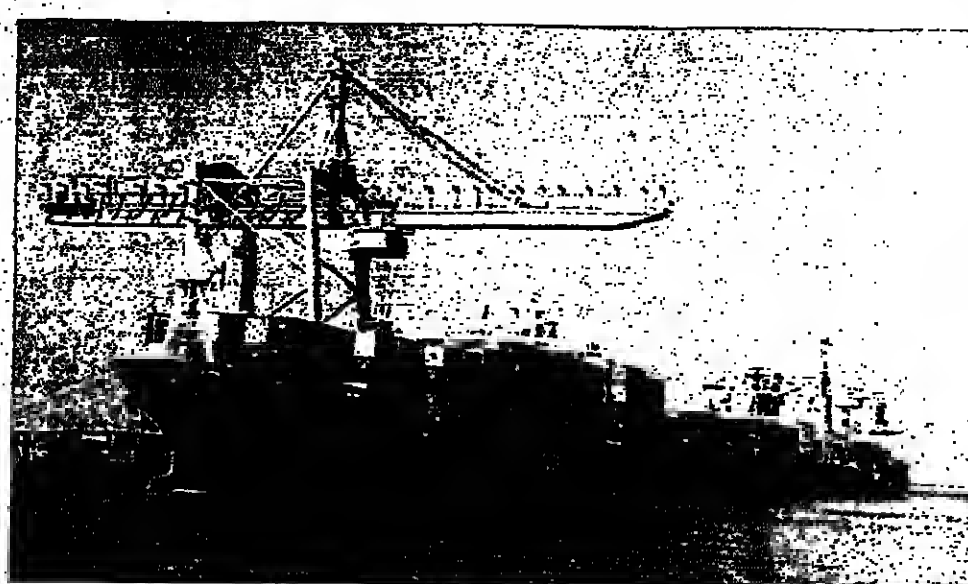
By Ihsan Sadeq
Star Staff Writer

AMID NEWS that the port at Aqaba is undergoing a comprehensive development plan to execute giant projects and qualify as a free zone, frustration is mounting over the fact that Haifa is actually receiving more interest from Jordanian importers. This reflects negatively on Aqaba's revenue and its status as a national port.

Some experts warned of the consequences of establishing a qualified industrial zone in Aqaba, which was approved during the last MENA conference in Doha last November. "It's imperative to take into consideration that this will have a negative impact on Aqaba as many importers prefer to import their cargo via Haifa," economic expert Ahmad Al-Nammani told The Star. He also warned of the losses Aqaba would have to bear, including large scale unemployment for workers at the port, as well as the financial loss to the state.

Recently, different economic associations expressed outrage that some Jordanian merchants choose to import their commodities through Israel's Haifa port, stressing that this badly affects the economy and has implications for food safety.

President of the Council of Professional Associations, Mr. Hassan Jaber, said that importing via Haifa puns Jordanian traders under Israeli control. In addition, "import transport services will also lose because of inevitable delays and complicated inspection procedures. Forced to pay higher costs, Jordanian merchants will then have to raise the prices of their goods to compensate for these additional expenses. Most private merchants questioned about their reasons for using



Aqaba port hopes to get busier

the Haifa port refused to be interviewed.

Mr. Jaber also stressed that using Haifa is a major blow to national phosphate and potash exports. 85 percent of which go to India and the Far East (6.5 million tons), considered the backbone of Jordanian trade. They depend on the availability of empty ships at Aqaba or the Red Sea, and carry fertilizers to cover the cost of their trips.

"If Aqaba is deprived of ships because cereals, sugar and rice are imported via Haifa, then there will be no available carriers for potash and phosphate," he maintained.

Referring to the same case, Mr. Halem Abu Rahneh, managing director of the Jordan Trade Association, said that many private sector areas substantially support the national economy at Aqaba, such as transport and manpower, adding, "We have to give priority to national interest and enhance

the port's facilities to guarantee its competitiveness in the region."

What is needed is a strong awareness among importers to use our national port to import their goods, putting aside profit and material gain.

Mr. Husni Abu Ghazala, president of the Engineers' Association, stressed that the seduction of material profit will destroy our infrastructure and expose our national interests to hazards. He called on every importer to boycott any commodity imported via Haifa and to back goods imported by Arab ports.

Mr. Ali Hattar, member in the anti-normalization committee at the Association of Engineering pointed out that about 36 percent of imported foodstuffs come via Aqaba, including strategic goods such as wheat, sugar, rice and barley. "These goods are a strategic reserve in the Kingdom for use in emer-

gency cases, such as war or natural disasters, so it is imperative that they are not at the mercy of another state."

However, officials repeatedly stress that Aqaba is a competitive port, that it offers traders advanced services and low cost handling and delivery. Minister of Transport and Communications, Mr. Sami Qamouh said primary studies revealed that the cost of importing cereals via Aqaba

compared to fees imposed by neighboring ports between \$2.5 to \$5 less. Transportation of one ton of cereal costs \$38 from Aqaba to Amman, including land transit, compared to \$42.6 from Latakya to Amman, \$41.9 from Beirut and \$40.5 from Haifa.

Mr. Qamouh didn't deny that some small merchants have imported hundreds of tons of cereals via Haifa, but stressed that these were relatively small quantities. Only 500 vehicles carried shipments of some foodstuffs such as maize, fodder, sesame, flour, wheat and barley. High level talks are currently underway with Egyptian officials to reduce crossing charges at the Suez Canal to revive trade at Aqaba.

Some experts meanwhile, go as far as to suggest that fines should be imposed by the government on merchants choosing to import through ports other than Aqaba.

Some merchants argue that Jordan could take measures to encourage Israel to use Aqaba for its imports from South East Asia. During his current visit to Israel, Dr. Hani Al-Mulqi, minister of industry and trade, is expected to discuss issues of bilateral economic ties, including the Haifa-Aqaba issue.

First ministry to get ISO 9002 certification

AMMAN (Star) - The Jordanian Business and Industry Council (JBIC) has announced that the Ministry of Public Works and Housing has become the first Jordanian ministry to receive ISO 9002 certification.

With this, Jordanian companies have started to implement certain measures aimed at providing the customer with a guarantee of high quality. The ISO 9002 is a quality standard, which is designed to meet this demand.

So far, 121 Jordanian companies have been awarded the ISO 9002 certification. The Ministry of Public Works and Housing is the first Jordanian ministry to receive this certification. The Ministry of Public Works and Housing is the first Jordanian ministry to receive this certification.

Following the initiative of His Royal Highness Prince Hassan bin Talal, the Ministry of Public Works and Housing is the first Jordanian ministry to receive this certification.

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Regular follow-up audit will be performed to ensure the continued compliance of the quality management system with the international requirements.

Latin American economy stable, but concerns abound

By Chris Kraul

CHICLAYO Peru—The common wisdom is that Latin America has weathered Asia's economic crisis just fine. But that is not entirely true. Across the region, projects are being delayed and tensions are rising.

The fact is that foreigners, rattled by Asia's meltdown, are cutting back sharply on their Latin American investments, a trend that is causing ballooning deficits, swooning stock markets and sinking economic growth.

Disappointment is almost palpable in this small north Peruvian town. Earlier this year, the locals were gearing up to start construction on one of the world's largest copper mines in the nearby mountains.

The Canadian mining company Cambior was poised to spend a staggering \$2.2 billion on the project and hire close to 1,000 employees, providing much-needed jobs.

But that was before copper prices, undercut by a collapse in demand from Asia, tumbled from more than \$1 a pound last year to the current 70 cents. Asia, it seems, no longer needed much copper for wiring in construction and computers.

Now, Cambior has put plans for the Peruvian mine on hold indefinitely until copper prices rebound. Cambior has also slammed the brakes on an \$800-million copper project in Argentina.

Indeed, the rising tide of direct investments that foreigners have been pouring into oil

pipelines, retail chains, power plants, auto factories and other Latin projects at an average annual growth rate of 28 percent actually will decline 9 percent this year from last, according to experts.

And that's not all. Fully half of the \$4.1 billion that Latin America-only mutual funds boasted last October has since fled for safer havens such as Wall Street. It's part of investors' flight from emerging markets to more stable environments.

The funds' outflow began with a vengeance and it's unprecedented. Even after the Mexican peso crisis in 1994, you had a bounce up," said Jim Barrineau, an equity strategist at Salomon Smith Barney.

But economists here seem confident, even serene, that the region can withstand the worst effects of the Asian contagion. Barring a complete collapse in Japan—the whole world's nightmare—they insist the impacts will be short-lived and manageable.

They attribute the investor flight more to short-term skittishness about Third World economies in general than a reaction to the hemisphere's basic economic strength, which they say remains strong. Despite the chill winds from Asia, economic growth in the region will be positive in 1998. And inflation, a perennial nemesis in Brazil and elsewhere, is firmly in check.

The underlying reason for long-term optimism is that Latin

American countries have instituted many of the fundamental reforms that Asian countries are now rushing to put in place in banking, investment and other industries.

Those changes have led to stronger and sounder financial systems than in 1994, when the Mexican peso crisis shook the region with its "tequila effect."

Largely because of reforms and the improved business climate, more than half the foreign capital flowing into Latin America is the desirable kind—money directed at brick and mortar factories, offices and other long-term investments, according to Santander Investment of New York.

In the early 1990s, such "direct investment" was less than 15 percent of the money entering the region. The rest was mostly "hot money," looking for short-term profits in stocks and bonds.

This dramatic shift in Latin American investment is important because it has lent more stability to governments as they try to maintain economic equilibrium, Santander economist Lawrence Goodman said.

"We have seen a plunging of capital flow to emerging markets, especially in short-term or speculative instruments. But because of many companies' expansion strategies, long-term capital is picking up the slack," Goodman said.

Still, direct investment in Latin America overall will fall to \$47.7 billion this year from \$52.9 billion last year, Goodman

said. The medium- and long-term prospects for the Brazilian economy are certainly brighter than the short-term and you're seeing that reflected in the surprisingly good investments we are attracting from outside the country," said Paul G. B. L. de Almeida, coordinator of the Institute for Applied Economic Research here.

Still, no one here dismisses the Asian impact. The crisis will cause a 5 percent drop—about \$10 billion—in Latin American exports this year, which will lead to widening trade deficits, especially in places such as Chile, Peru and Venezuela, which are heavy exporters of commodities, notably oil and copper. Trade deficits are not new because countries have to finance them by borrowing at home or abroad.

The Asian crisis' primary effect has been double-barreled as far as trade is concerned. First, it has caused the shrinkage of Asian markets for products ranging from Chilean copper and Argentine beef to Mexican auto parts and Brazilian steel.

Secondly, Latin American exporters have lost ground in markets such as the United States and Europe due to the "substitution effect"—consumers substituting Asian goods such as steel and textiles that, due to the devaluations, are now cheaper than Latin American goods.

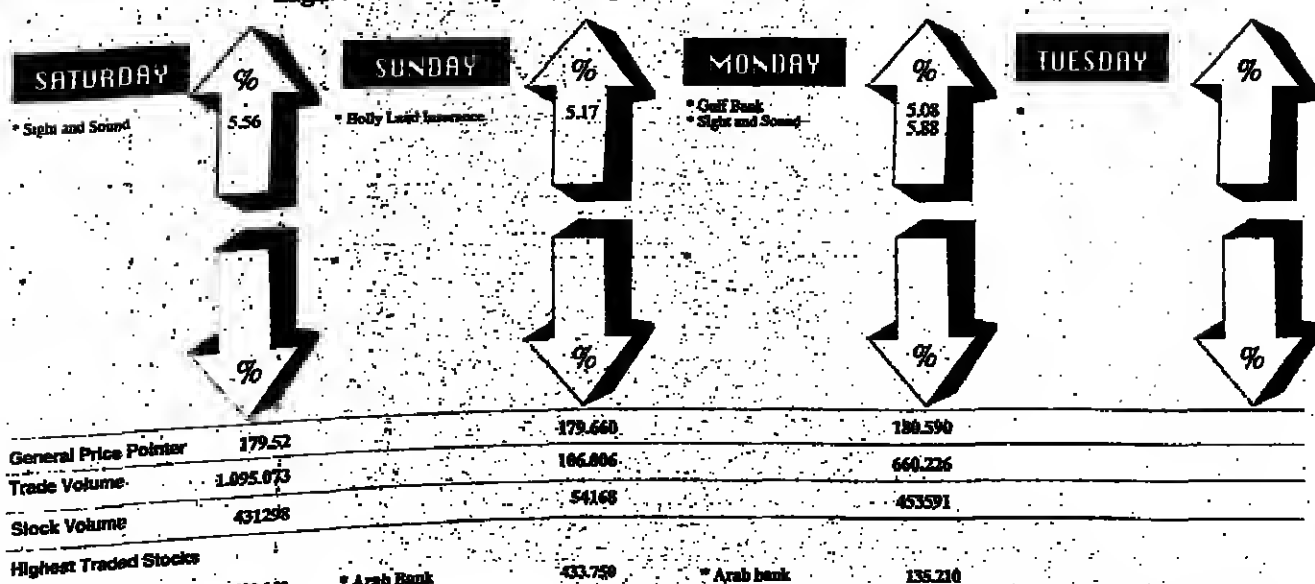
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Ethnic Chinese live dangerously

By Samsudin Berlian

PETER, A Chinese-Indonesian entrepreneur, is back after fleeing to Singapore at the height of the bloody riots in the country, but he no longer feels at home.

"Who knows what will happen. We may have to run away again," said the 32-year-old businessman, who came back with his wife, children, parents and in-laws only because limited resources prevented them from staying longer in Singapore.

Peter has revived the shoe distribution business he started a year ago on a day-to-day basis, but makes no long-term plans.

His attitude reflects the unease many Chinese Indonesians feel in the wake of continued hostility toward them amid the country's economic crisis.

Their fears have not been eased by views that the Habibie government has not done enough to address violence directed against them in May, even with hundreds of cases of rapes of ethnic Chinese women that emerged in June, many of them through the Internet.

On July 15 President Bacharuddin Habibie issued a statement expressing regret for the rapes and sexual attacks. He has also created a separate probe body for the incidents. The Jakarta administration has dropped the codes long placed on identity cards of Indonesian Chinese.

"Wait until the next election," Peter says, arguing that Habibie's government was not doing anything right both in politics and economics.

The signs of fear among many ordinary Chinese Indonesians are plenty. A company is reaping a windfall making medieval chastity belts to sell to ethnic Chinese women, following reports of the rapes that took place May 13 to 15.

In their desire to leave the country, young women are said to be looking for foreign husbands and considering becoming mail-order brides. The illegal gun business is now on the rise.

Groups ethnic Chinese are asserting their rights and have formed political parties, but people like Peter said he does not believe they can protect him. Among the some 40 new parties set up in the last few months, two are distinctly Chinese-based.

Chinese Indonesians make up some 3



Indonesian Chinese community was a prime target for looters during the recent riots in Jakarta

percent of the country's 200 million people, but their relative wealth has exposed them to resentment by other Indonesians.

Local Chinese say they are worried by remarks blaming them for the scarcity of food and various goods. Far from being a "distribution" problem as cited by officials, they say there simply is not enough supplies because imports have become prohibitive with the rupiah's collapse.

And with the dollar four to five times more expensive than before, nobody wants to risk investment in producing any kind of goods, they explain.

To many, some government officials' penchant for blaming the Chinese for problems with food and basic items is another ploy by the government to find a scapegoat for its own incompetence.

As a consequence, people like Celine, a finance director whose skills make her a qualified immigrant into Canada, are leaving while they can. If things go smoothly, she and her husband will move out next year. She does not know what kind of job she will have there, but "the important thing is to get out of this unsafe place."

"I am afraid. They were not really hungry yet last month, and they already targeted the Chinese. Now they learned it was okay. The government did not

punish anybody. Soon, because of this crisis, they will be really hungry," she said. "They will do the same again. Even more."

The departure of skilled professionals creates a brain drain, adding another problem besides capital flight, which according to the Indonesian chamber of commerce and industry has reached 100 billion dollars.

Right now, Indonesian Chinese face a tough choice, to stay, rebuild and speak up and organise for their rights, or just give up and live elsewhere.

The Indonesia government, keen on preserving unity across the world's largest archipelago, has long frowned on high-profile displays of Chinese identity and culture, including public celebrations of the lunar new year.

No Chinese school is allowed. Only one heavily controlled Chinese newspaper is in circulation and the use of the Chinese language is discouraged.

Still, unlike the last three decades, the issue of Indonesia's policy of assimilation of its ethnic Chinese — and the deep distrust it has fostered between indigenous Indonesians or "pribumi" — has come out into the open.

But even for those who choose to stay, and are engaging in schemes like training pribumi in business skills, how

the government deals with increasing signs that the May violence against the ethnic Chinese had been an organised attack is a key issue.

Habibie blamed the May violence on wide economic disparities and indicated he did not think it was politically motivated. But documented reports by human rights activist Father Sandayawan argued that the May riots were not spontaneous, but well-planned and executed by a highly-organised group.

Human rights activists have told stories of the rapes of nearly 200 Chinese women, including the gang rape of little girls in front of families, of young women in buses and on the streets, of those being thrown into burning buildings afterwards, and of those who later needed psychiatric treatment.

Nicole Heyzen, executive director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (Unifem), said recently that the rapes were part of an organised reaction to a crisis and that the culprits must be brought to trial.

"This is totally unacceptable, disturbing and even more upsetting than war crime rapes, as Indonesia was not in a war with another country but caught in its own internal crisis," she said.

Systematic rape as a weapon in conflict has been classified a crime against humanity, and a United Nations tribunal in 1996 ruled that the rapes of Muslim women in Bosnia were war crimes.

Sandayawan's report, whose findings are similar to those by Indonesia's Commission on Human Rights, argues that there were too many similarities among the anti-Chinese attacks to have been a spontaneous burst of anarchy; the timing, the kinds of stores that were burned and looted, methods of how the riots, looting, killing, and burning were carried out.

"How could this be 'accidental'?" the report asked. The whole thing was the result of a patterned, systematic, and organised operation.

"That de facto many Chinese suffered that barbaric treatment is a brutal discrimination often used in the New Order political game. And so many times before, Chinese were forced again to be the victims of an elite political game," the report said. "There are enough indications that an elite authority is responsible."

Oneworld Online

East Timor

Indonesia, Portugal agree to autonomy talks

By Farhan Haq

UNITED NATIONS, Aug 5 (IPS) - The pace of the East Timor peace process moved up a notch Wednesday when Indonesia and Portugal agreed to hold in-depth talks about granting "wide-ranging autonomy" to the region, perhaps by the year's end.

Following two days of meetings chaired by U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Indonesia's Foreign Minister Ali Alatas and Portuguese Foreign Minister Jaime Gama agreed that their representatives would hold intensified discussions on Jakarta's proposal for a "special status" for East Timor.

The two sides would seek agreement on the autonomy question by the end of the year, and the next round of talks on the autonomy proposal will be held in New York by the end of

September under the chairmanship of U.N. envoy Jamsheer Marker.

"We have a very serious proposal on the table," Annan said after talks ended Wednesday. "We all believe this is progress in the work we are doing."

The two nations also agreed to a long-standing proposal to establish interest sections in friendly embassies in both Lisbon and Jakarta and to relax visa policies with each other. Portugal would likely continue to use the Netherlands embassy in Jakarta to handle its interests there. Gama said, while Alatas added that Indonesia may work through Thailand's embassy in Lisbon.

Annan meanwhile announced that the United Nations would step up talks with a range of key East Timorese leaders - including Nobel Peace Prize laureates Jose Ramos Horta and Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo - to involve them more in the peace

process.

To boost the peace process in other aspects, the United Nations also announced Wednesday that a new round of peace talks between East Timorese leaders—including those favouring the island's independence and those supporting Indonesia's 1976 annexation claim—will be held by October.

"What we have achieved is...not a breakthrough in substance perhaps, but very good progress," Alatas said. He contended that the results in this week's talks proved that recent peace efforts by Indonesia's new President Bacharuddin Jusuf Habibie were not "a bogus proposal" but rather "the most realistic, viable and just solution" to East Timor's 23-year crisis.

Portugal is still regarded by the United Nations as Timor's colonial authority despite Indonesia's 1975 invasion of the

state during a brief struggle for independence. The Portuguese were now satisfied that Jakarta would hold autonomy talks without insisting on a previous precondition that its rule over East Timor be recognised by Lisbon.

A UN communiqué said the autonomy discussions were "without prejudice to (Indonesia's and Portugal's) basic positions of principle."

"In reality, the requirement for preconditions is not present," Gama said. "That's what favours the negotiations."

Indonesia's posture on East Timor has changed dramatically since economic woes and student protests led to the ouster of President Suharto in May. Habibie has pledged genuine autonomy—although not independence—for the region and has released some Timorese political prisoners and withdrawn hundreds of troops from East

Timor. Between the two nations until Gusmao's release could be settled. Sources told IPS that, following Gusmao's own support for the establishment of interest sections prior to his release, Lisbon decided to go along with the proposal. That exchange remains one of the few concrete improvements in the peace process, despite the various steps taken this week to boost at least the pace and the stakes of the negotiations.

As John Miller, spokesman for the pro-independence East Timor Action Network, contended, "All that's really substantive, aside from the exchange of a few diplomats, is a timetable for more talks." Yet Miller believed the autonomy talks would be a positive step if the Timorese—roughly a third of whom were killed in the immediate aftermath of the Indonesian invasion—could gain effective control of their affairs in a step toward self-rule.

The question remained how much autonomy Jakarta would be willing to offer. Alatas said that all areas—including education and most government functions—would be on the table, except for three functions he said were normally outside the concept of autonomy: foreign affairs, defense and "certain monetary and fiscal policies." Certainly the pressure on Jakarta to make an acceptable offer to East Timor has grown since Suharto's fall and East Asia's ongoing economic woes. The U.S. Congress is considering extending a ban on several different military training programmes which have been linked to human rights abuses, while the Senate last month passed a resolution calling on President Bill Clinton to support a referendum on East Timor's self-determination. Meanwhile, the International Federation for East Timor has called the autonomy proposals "an interim step"—a point echoed by Gama—but added that autonomy is "only a means, not an end, without acceptance by the people of East Timor."

Alatas promised progress on all three areas, contending that there would be a "much more reduced force" on the island in the coming months and that more prisoners would be released. He added, however, that any release of Timorese resistance leader Xanana Gusmao, the jailed head of the pro-independence forces, would not be considered at this stage.

"Xanana Gusmao does not qualify in the present phase of amnesties given to political prisoners and detainees," Alatas argued. "He has killed, he has burned villages, he has killed innocent villagers and raided the properties of villages...It is for these criminal acts that he has been brought before the courts and convicted."

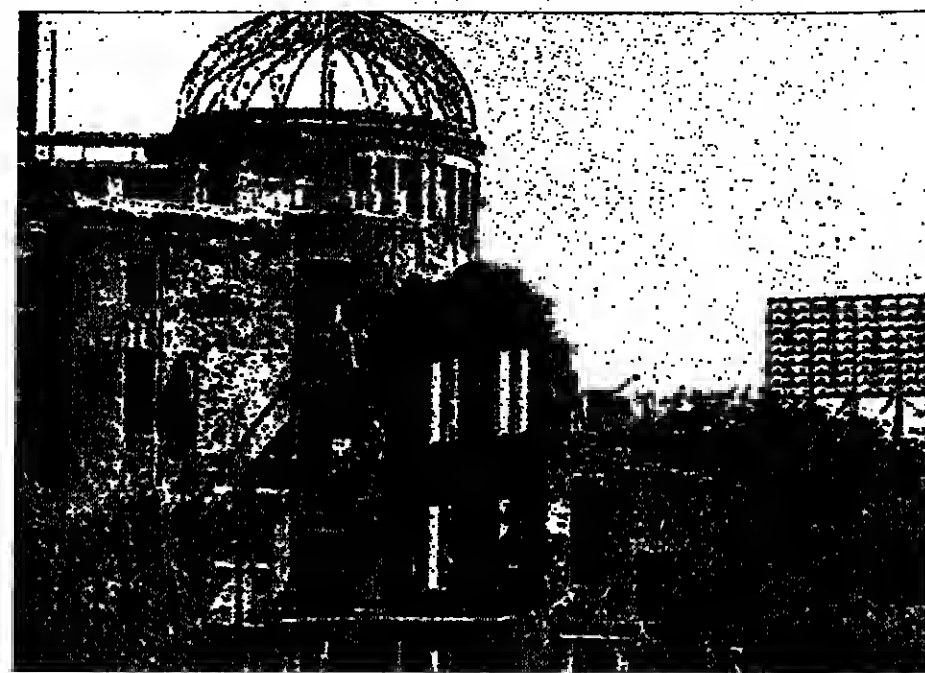
Still, Alatas conceded, Gusmao was a "special case" and "we do visualise the release of Xanana Gusmao as part of an overall solution." Several world leaders, including South African President Nelson Mandela, have lobbied recently for a settlement that might result in the resistance leader's amnesty.

For its part, Portugal had been unwilling to accept the opening of interest sections

Oneworld Online

Disarmament

Peace appeals stream from Hiroshima and South Asia



Hiroshima. A constant reminder of nuclear devastation.

By Beena Sarwar

LONDON (IPS)—Smoke from hundreds of incense sticks curls up into the sky as Hiroshima, Thursday, remembered the tens of thousands of people who died in the aftermath of the bombing of the Japanese city in 1945.

The attack on the city which was followed by a similar bombing three days later, on Aug. 9, on Nagasaki, together killed an estimated 200,000 people and thousands continued to die every year from the after-effects of the bomb.

On the 53rd anniversary of that tragedy, thousands of people, among them Japan's new Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, gathered in Hiroshima to mark the day. Peace activists from around the world including India and Pakistan, stood in silence as the peace bell sounded and dozens of doves were released into the sky.

Six hundred students from our school died," says a shy 13 year old in halting English, pointing to a memorial in stone on which is inscribed, "Let peace prevail on earth."

Across from the monument, a crane crafted in metal plays solemnly, sending garlands of tiny paper cranes draped below it. Cranes signify long life in Japanese tradition, and according to a well-known proverb, "If you fold 1,000 paper cranes you can get whatever you wish."

In 1955, Sadako Sasaki, the 12 year old who contracted leukemia from earlier exposure to the atomic bomb took literally to the Japanese proverb, refusing all pain-killing medication. She folded 645 of the tiny birds before she died.

Her grieving classmates contributed to the building of a children's peace monument in Hiroshima, and her story has come to symbolise the horror of nuclear war, which spares neither rich nor poor, the old or young. Hiroshima is awash with garlands of paper cranes, bouquets, banners and placards as families and friends of those who died hold private services.

At the official memorial service, Prime Minister Obuchi described the rival nuclear tests by India and Pakistan in May as "regrettable", but disappointed peace activists by refusing to commit himself to pulling Japan out of a controversial military alliance with nuclear-powered United States.

Delegates at the World Conference Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs, organised by Gensuikyo or the Japan council against the bombs, earlier this week in Hiroshima had hoped Tokyo would show a change of heart following the n-tests in South Asia.

Japan is the only country to have suffered a nuclear bomb attack, and appalled by New Delhi and Islamabad's breaking of the 24-year unofficial moratorium on testing by non-nuclear powers, slapped sanctions on both countries.

Indian and Pakistani delegations at the

conference found they were the focus of considerable attention. "Before we heard the presentation of the two countries, we thought all people there were in favour of the bomb," was a commonly heard comment.

On Tuesday, the delegates issued a joint statement urging their governments to "defuse tension in the region" and resolve all outstanding matters of dispute through "dialogue".

"We demand that the meagre resources of our countries should not be frittered away on military expenditure, these resources should be utilised to eradicate the grave problems facing the two countries like hunger, ill health, illiteracy and lack of basic infrastructure," the statement said.

Prominent participants from the South Asia region included Pakistani physicist A.H. Nayyar, Indian journalist Praful Bidwai and a retired chief of the Indian navy, Admiral L. Randass. The delegates circulated a joint statement against nuclear tests and weapons, by retired Pakistani and Indian military personnel, which calls on their governments to "take the lead by doing away with nuclear weapons in a manifest and verifiable manner, and to confine nuclear research and development strictly to peaceful and beneficial spheres."

The conference expressed solidarity with the rallies and meetings calling for global nuclear disarmament held across India and Pakistan on "Hiroshima Day".

Several hundred people including schoolchildren joined a march against nuclear weapons in the Indian capital chanting slogans and holding placards with slogans like, "Stop Nuclear Madness" and "No More Hiroshimas, No More Nagasakis."

"True greatness and strength must be and can only be rooted in worthwhile economic, social and cultural foundations, not in the hollowness of power attained on the backs of millions of poor," argued graduate student Sadaf Srivastava of Delhi University.

At least one thousand people joined a peace rally in Karachi, Pakistan's largest city, where a poem by one of the most famous poets of undivided India, Saifur Lodhi, "A! Sharif Insano!" (Oh, gentle people), was read out. In the capital city Islamabad, four memorable documentary films related to the bombing of Japan, as well as about the danger of global stockpiles of nuclear weapons, were screened.

It was the first time that pro-peace and anti-nuclear meetings were called on the same day in both countries with participants told to wear white ribbons.

"We must protest if we are to survive," a university teacher in Delhi said. "We, the people of the region, must reach out to each other, across borders and build a vibrant movement for peace."

Oneworld Online



Lighting candles to remember the thousands that perished in the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings

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The international school Choueifat—Amman

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At the playground



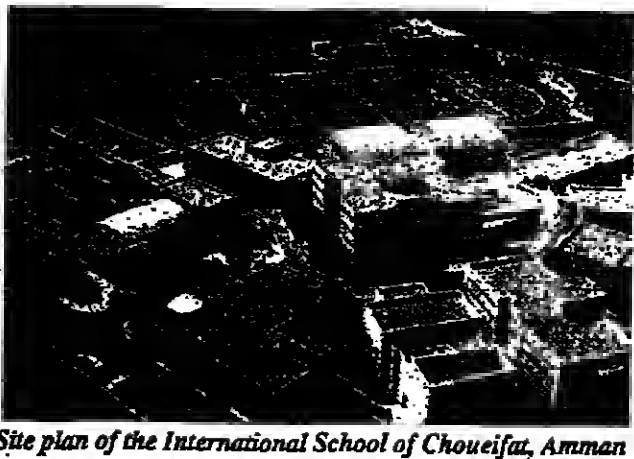
The Kindergarten swimming pool

AMMAN (Star)—The International School of Choueifat was founded in Lebanon in 1886, in the village of Choueifat, a suburb of Beirut, Lebanon.

It is a member of the SABIS® School Network and is one of 19 schools in eight countries around the world: USA, Pakistan, UK, Egypt, Germany, UAE, Lebanon and Jordan.

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Site plan of the International School of Choueifat, Amman

swimming pool.

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Silsal

The house of craft



AMMAN (Star)—Pottery making as an ancient craft was one of the arts that played an important role in the flourishing of civilizations in Islam, as well as the empires preceding it. The skilled artisan was highly regarded by members of the court, and invited to travel from faraway lands to become a handsomely paid portage of that court.

As a result, the ceramist was very proud of his craft and accordingly signed each piece of pottery quite conspicuously for posterity. This tradition continues today with Al Silsal.

The artisan quality of the craft is emphasized in each of Silsal's hand-made pieces. This procedure is a long process, that passes through many stages requiring various skills at each level. The shaping of each piece requires years of training on the wheel. This is usually a profession that is passed on as a family tradition. The pieces are then dried slowly and fired at 950 c. The fired pieces are dipped in Glaze, which is pre-

pared at the Silsal workshop, and then decorated by incising and coloring. Again skill, creativity and meticulousness are very important at this stage. These pieces are fired again at 1300 c. The firing is a slow process because of the fragility of the wares, this is why each

movement and sensitivity to all living things make nature a constant inspiration for Silsal designs. Simple lines stylized to represent a leaf, a fruit, a flower, an animal or a bird are an endless subject matter for creating unique pieces.

The human figure at its most primitive is also represented in Silsal's pottery. Here the humility of the human figure is stripped of its elaborate clothing, its highness, elegance, dignity and grace. The figures depicted in motion are dancing, touching and sending the message that in such a pluralistic world there is beauty in harmony and tolerance. Some of these pieces are inspired by African arts.

Silsal's artisans characteristically show uniquely in each piece of pottery produced, bringing together the input of some 20 artists. Working as a team gives the artisans at Silsal the opportunity for dialogue, transcending individual character for artistic excellence.



firing takes about 3-4 days. Filling a kiln is a chore by itself because of the many variables involved in each firing. Some pieces are handbuilt, which adds another dimension to the workshop. Handbuilt pieces are more artistic and time consuming and so no two pieces can look exactly alike. A perception for the envi-

Black parents want focus on academics

By Ann Bradley

AFRICAN-AMERICAN parents, by an overwhelming margin, want the public schools to focus on achievement rather than on racial diversity and integration, so said a recent survey in the US.

When asked what the main priority for schools should be, 80 percent of black parents chose raising academic standards and achievements, according to a survey by Public Agenda, a nonpartisan public-opinion research firm in New York City.

Public Agenda and the Public Education Network—a Washington-based group of non-profit local education fund—plan to use the findings to engage Americans in conversations about race and education nationwide next year.

White parents in the survey, whom researchers found "very reluctant to talk about education in racial terms," expressed anxiety about integration. More than 60 percent of those polled said they believed discipline and safety problems, lower reading scores, and social problems would follow, if large numbers of black students began attending a mostly white school.

Still, both groups of parents said that integration remained an important goal. 80 percent of black parents and 66 percent of white parents said it was very important that their own child's school be racially integrated.

"School integration serves important—mostly social—functions," the study concludes, "but academic achievement is, for both groups, a separate and independent issue."

"The findings challenge some commonly held assumptions about what African-American parents consider most important," said Deborah Wadsworth, the executive director of Public Agenda. While black parents bring different experiences to the issue of public education from those of whites, she said, "their concern about quality education and academic stan-

dards, and their agenda for achieving these, is nearly identical."

Wendy D. Purdiefoy, the president of the Public Education Network, called the results "exciting, affirming, and hopeful." "There is common ground about the need for high-quality public education, on what education ought to look like, and that standards and good teaching and community support are essential," she said.

The study concludes that both groups of parents show "a distinctive lack of energy and passion for integration." Those attitudes stem from both races' doubts that integration improves learning, the report says, and from white parents' fears that they will have to "forfeit the schools for which they searched long and hard for."

"Time to Move On: African-American and White Parents Set an Agenda for Public Schools," presents the results of 30-minute telephone surveys of 800 black and 800 white parents, conducted between March 26 to April 17, as well as the findings from eight focus groups and individual interviews with parents and 22 public educators. The margin of error for both racial groups surveyed is plus or minus 3 percentage points.

The focus groups were separated by race in an attempt to make participants feel more comfortable about what they wanted to say. Public Agenda hopes to conduct similar research with other groups of minority parents, such as Hispanics and Asian-Americans.

Black parents' insistence on academic achievement reflects their fears about how their children are faring in schools, the report suggests. "In their minds, the problem is at crisis point," it says. A lot of black parents (56 percent) estimated that fewer than half of all black students attend good schools with good teachers. By contrast, 74 percent thought that white students attended good schools. And while 48 percent of black parents thought that more than half of black students are

doing well in school, 47 percent disagreed, saying that fewer than half were achieving, the study found.

Black parents believe the problems facing black students are widespread, affecting even those outside inner cities and without regard to family income. In fact, 60 percent said they would switch their children from public to private schools if money were not an obstacle; only 38 percent would stay with their public schools. White parents also saw problems with the education of African-American children, but tended to believe the problems were confined to low-income families and inner-city schools.

The survey also examines attitudes toward the issues of affirmative action, in school hiring and of alleged racial bias in standardized testing. Asked to choose among three ways to hire a superintendent in a mostly black district, 76 percent of black parents said the choice should be the best candidate, regardless of race. Only 4 percent would have hired a black candidate even if it meant turning away a better-qualified white candidate.

"These findings are strong and consistent but somewhat counterintuitive," the report says, noting that 68 percent of black parents thought that there was some truth to the statement that teachers and principals, because of racial stereotypes, had lower expectations for black students. The same proportion said that too many white teachers didn't know how to deal with black students because they were from different cultures.

Even though they believe black students "sometimes pay a price when taught by whites," the study says, black parents—and white consumers—think that racial considerations divert schools from academics.

And although racial bias in standardized testing is a perennial issue, the study found that most African-American parents reject bias as a reason for black students' falling less well than whites on tests. Only 28 percent attributed such gaps to cultural bias.

Forty-four percent of black parents believed that the tests "measure real differences in educational achievement," while 18 percent cited a failure of expectations for the gap.

"A lot of parents don't lay down the law with their kids," the report quotes one black parent in Cleveland as saying. "It's the quality and effort and training, starting at home." Indeed, 72 percent of black parents agreed that "too many black parents neglect to push their kids to work hard in school," a statement supported by 59 percent of white parents.

Neal Johnson, a senior research partner with the Educational Testing Service's Washington-based office of public leadership, said the study's findings agree with the testing company's own research, which has found that the percentage of minority adults who believe testing is biased is dropping. But he cautioned that Public Agenda polled only parents, who would tend to be younger than the African-American population at large, and thus less likely to have experienced testing bias in their own school years.

"Parents are ahead of the politicians and the talk show pundits on the issue of test fairness," Mr. Johnson said. "They know what their kids are experiencing in terms of the quality of education, and this data suggests that they're proceeding with that information."

Beth Dille, the executive director of the Grand Rapids (Mich.) Public Education Fund, which is affiliated with the Public Education Network, said the findings "absolutely mirror what we hear here." "Everybody wants a really good future for their kids," she said. "I think it is unfortunate that so many people make judgments about parents of color wanting less for their kids, when they're trapped in a system they can't control."

Education Week Magazine



Wreckage from the Titanic lies on the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean as viewed by a remotely-operated vehicle 7 August, 1998. A spokesman for the Discovery Channel announced August 11 that the RMS Titanic crew, which owns the rights to the ship's salvage, had recovered a 20-ton starboard hull plate about 10 miles from the main wreckage site. The plate, which contains portals and is from the first-class section of the ship, will be crucial in trying to understand how the ship sank.

Reuters

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Fuheis Festival

A celebration of heritage, culture, community

By Ghassan Joha
Special to The Star

TAKE A ride in your car to the north-west area outside Amman and you will definitely see a difference, not only in the weather, but in the scenery, as evergreens sway gently in the moist cool breeze of summer.

Turn onto the Al Hummar road and carry on for about 10 kilometers until you see the modern buildings of the outskirts of Fuheis city blending into the hills and high mountains. These mountains are about 1050 metres above sea level, giving a stunning view across to the other side of the Jordan River.

Fuheis city has a long history. The Ammonites first built it in 2000 years B.C. in order to force the ancient Israelites to retreat to the west. Later, the Romans and Byzantines made the city their main commercial center between Palestine and the East. Archaeological evidence also shows that the Mamluks later liberated the city from the Crusaders and used it as a communications outpost.

In the 19th century, settlers built homes in hard stone and bricks in what is now the downtown area, better known now as Khirbet El-Dair. You can still see these ruins today.

"Most of the inhabitants were living in the ancient town during the Ottoman empire and the population has continued to grow," said Jamal Hattar, a well-informed Fuheisi engineer. Now, the population is around 12000. He added that the main trade for the people there was agriculture and animal husbandry and that Fuheis' land is famous for producing high quality grapes and crops.

Besides fruit, Fuheis' water is some of the finest in Jordan because of the Al Azraq spring. "The city is still considered a sample of the Jordanian countryside." That reality seems to be hopeful.

During the 1950s, a huge cement factory was built, which polluted the whole town with its gases. Mr Hattar, the former mayor of the city, said that at first

people opposed the factory by rejecting offers to sell their land, but when it came down to it and they were offered the money they agreed, but not without regret. "Of course, money can't substitute the great value of agriculture, as it was their only livelihood," he added.

Mr Hattar is currently working at the city branch of the Jordanian Environmental Society as vice chairman to Fakhri Smeirani who has led the branch since 1994. Mr Smeirani told The Star that the factory disturbs the peaceful serenity of the city. "In the past we all were living in peace, but because of the factory the city was urged to build a police station." The circle of pollution from the cement factory covers an area of 25 kilometers, reaching Amman.

HM King Hussein talked about the problem in a speech to Parliament in 1994. He called on MPs, experts and environmental officials to work hard to stop the pollution caused by the cement factory, which had resulted in harming the Kingdom. "Despite the King's speech, officials were lukewarm and didn't do anything to preserve Fuheis," Mr Smeirani added.

He said that the society was working hard with environmental committees and foreign experts to force the factory's management to conform to regulations. "We do hope in the near future to bring the city back to its former calmness."

The community itself, however, realized the need to promote a sense of pride in their city's history and heritage, as well as to ease some of the pressures of everyday life. To this end the Fuheis Youth Club organized the first Fuheis Festival in 1990 on the occasion of Jordan's Independence Day. Today however, the festival is a large, happy event, attracting people from all over Jordan, as well as many from Arab countries. This week the festival opens its 9th session on Thursday, 13 August.

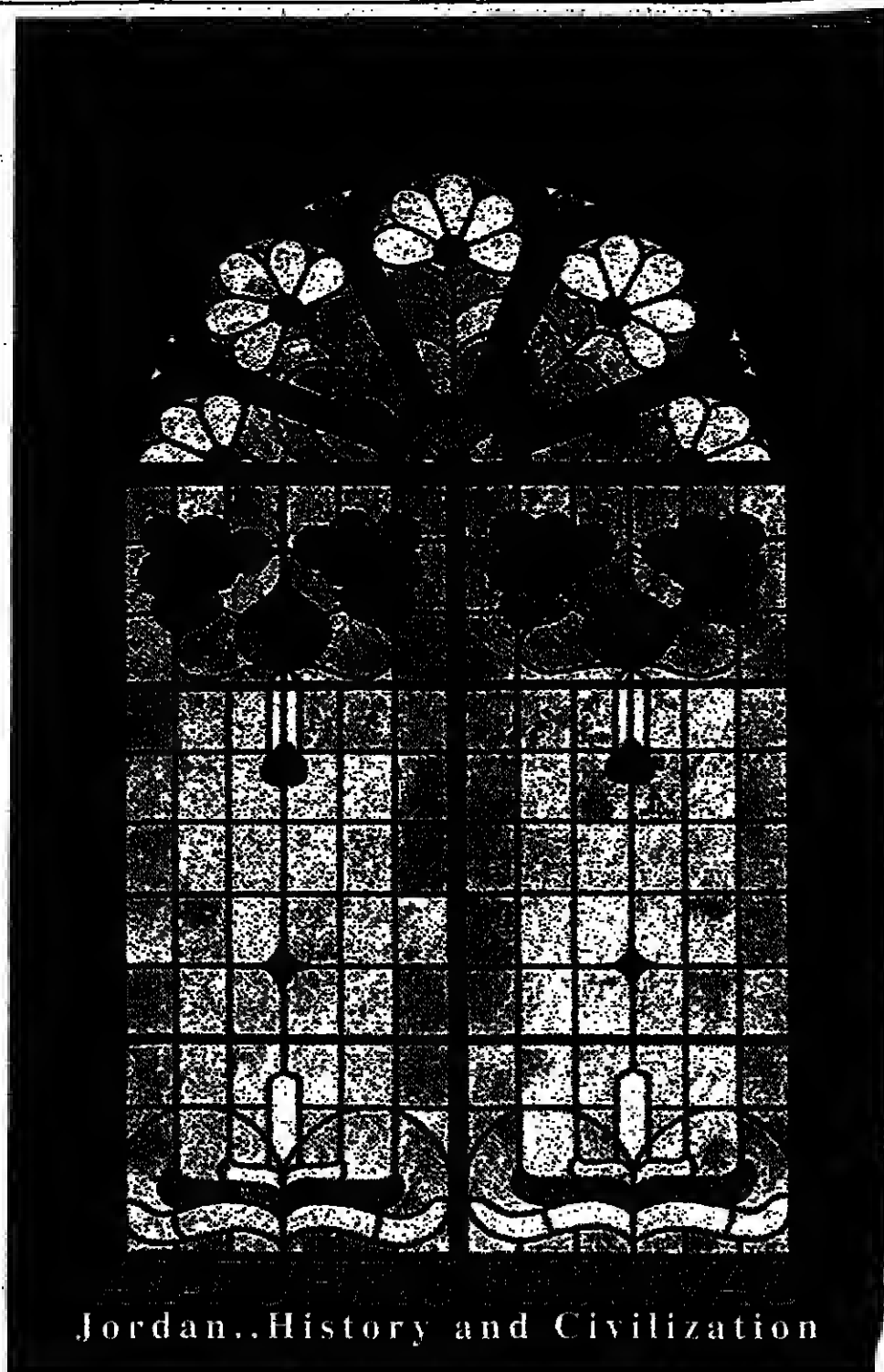
"The Fuheis Festival was founded to correlate with public issues and to voice the city's hopes and aims," Ayman Samawi, director of the festival, said at a recent press conference. He promised that this year's festival is aimed at families only. The opening ceremony will take place this afternoon in the Downtown area under the patronage of HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, at 5 pm.

This year, the festival promises the audience a variety of performances from Jordan and abroad. "We decided this year to enroll most of the Arab and national prominent personalities in different fields of art, culture and music and to concentrate on our Arab national heritage," Mr Samawi added. The life of the late Jordanian Shafeeq Ershadat will be featured at the "Main Personality Corner", where prominent figures will discuss his political life and the establishment of the state.

"Arab City Corner" this year will include the Iraqi capital, Baghdad, spotlighting its resistance to UN sanctions.

The festival is running a busy nine-day program of music, featuring prominent Arab singers and troupes, including George Wassaf from Syria, Nawal Zughbi from Lebanon, the Iraqi National Folklore Group, and Jihad Sarkise and Nasser Inshid from Jordan. The Family International Group and the National Music Conservatory, who will both be performing famous Arab songs.

Cultural highlights include Egyptian poet Ahmed Fouad Najim, along with other Arab poets, writers, actors and academics. The festival also has its regular exhibitions for art, books, the environment and health. Children, of course, will have a special program full of plays and art works for their enjoyment. The Fuheis festival runs until 21 August. ■



Jordan..History and Civilization



Fuheis city

Immersed in his monstrous obsession

By J.R. Moehring

HARDEEVILLE, S.C.—Dan Taylor wakes up two hours before dawn and stares at the dark, thinking about the monster.

When the swirling sky above the ocean looks like the creamy frosting on a birthday cake, the clouds like pink roses, he brews a pot of coffee and wakes Margaret, his wife of 22 years, and together they sit by the window, watching the sun rise and talking about the monster.

Just after dawn, he starts the long drive, past the joggers and golfers, past the fireworks stands and video poker parlors, past all the symbols and signs of easy fun and instant gratification that clutter the South Carolina coastline, until he reaches this shadeless town and this desolate industrial park, where he'll spend the day sweating and panting and chasing the monster.

Given half an afternoon, Taylor will have you believing this is the good life, that it's normal, even noble, for a 58-year-old man with a weak heart and a white beard to spend his dwindling days building a submarine with which to hunt the Loch Ness monster. Like the monster itself, Taylor's easier to believe in if you've actually seen him.

He might seem more ludicrous if he didn't look like every epic seafarer in lore and history, from Noah to Jonah, Ahab to Nemo, with a dash of Ernest Hemingway, to recall "The Old Man and the Sea." He might seem more comic if he didn't tell such a vivid and compelling tale of meeting the monster 30 years ago, both of them bumping and twirling on the bottom of Loch Ness like a couple of shag dancers. He might seem foolishly if he didn't have the money to finance a submarine, the know-how to build one and the respect of several esteemed scientists and researchers.

But Taylor doesn't care how he seems. He doesn't care if people point and giggle, which they usually do, when he stops in for lunch at the Cripple Crab. He doesn't care that Margaret's girlfriends tease her about being married to the Monster Hunter. He doesn't care, never will care, because his obsession crowds out much of the sensible world. Taylor's world consists of seven oceans and three strong-willed women. There's Margaret, of course. His mother, Justine. And his monster, Nessie.

He loves Margaret. He loves his mother. But something in him needs that monster.

He also needs his welders, who are due this afternoon to connect his main hull to his battery room. But welders, they're a funny breed. They keep their own kind of time, and this being Friday, and the temperature getting on near 100 degrees, there's always the chance they won't show.

He'll just have to adjust, adapt—improvise. When you're on the trail of a monster, you can't lose your focus, can't let yourself be blown off course by a few tardy welders. "There's nothing you can't overcome," he mumbles, "if you just don't pay attention to it."

He stands 5 feet, 9 inches in Toppersiders that curl up at the tips like an elf's slippers, and he leaves Toppersider prints of rust and muck wherever he goes. His chinos and denim shirt are so smeared with sweat and grease and grime and oil and what looks like crab juice that their original colors are as much a mystery as the existence of any monster.

Most obsessions eventually become monsters, but a monster because Taylor's obsession in 1969, and never let him go. It was several years after he left the Navy, where he'd served mainly on submarines, taking part in the blockade of Cuba and assorted top-secret war games. (He also spent the mid-1960s doing the most delicate submarine work of all, he says, scouring ocean floors for a hydrogen bomb the Air

Force had misplaced.)

He knew submarines like the back of his permanently tanned hand, knew the sea as few men do, from the inside out. With such rare expertise, he landed a job with University of Chicago biologist Roy P. Mackal, who was getting up an expedition to Scotland's notorious Loch Ness—that 23-mile-long, 1-mile-wide, 700-foot-deep strip of fresh water where for roughly 65 years a great sea serpent has been fleetingly, though never definitively, glimpsed.

Together, Taylor and Mackal ventured forth to find that inhabitant once and for all, their quest sponsored by the World Book Encyclopedia. With them they brought a small fiberglass submarine that Taylor built in his free time, and amid terrific fanfare, Taylor submerged.

The mission was doomed, however, by poor visibility and bad luck. Loch Ness is so thick with mud and peat, which rush into it constantly from surrounding hills, that Taylor couldn't see more than a few feet out his portholes. Also, the submarine was slow and hard to maneuver, which almost spelled disaster when its propeller got tangled in a nest of cables abandoned on the lake's floor.

"It was a little dangerous," Mackal says.



From his workshop in Hardeeville, S.C., Dan Taylor is building a submarine to probe the depths of Loch Ness. Photo by Erik Lesser.

"I thought, uh oh, all we need is to lose somebody."

On one of his last futile runs around the loch, Taylor was hovering at 250 feet, shining his lights into the murky water, when the submarine began to turn, unnaturally, like the second hand of a clock being pushed backward by a finger.

"I could tell the boat was turning," he says. "I don't even think it dawned on me that it was her. Until I got up."

That brief encounter—so haunting, so tantalizing—preoccupied him for the next 30 years, possessed him through careers as restaurateur and entrepreneur, builder and carpenter, repairman and inventor. "It's unfinished business is what it is," he says. "Someone gave me this assignment, and I failed. Now I'm going to fix it."

He looks at a blurry, black-and-white photograph of Nessie hanging like a pinup girl on the wall of his workshop, along with an ancient-looking calendar from the Southern Welding Co. (The welders. Where are they?) What doesn't hang on the walls is a blueprint. The submarine's designs are stored inside Taylor's head.

"An artist wouldn't make a blueprint," he

says. "It's like a painter can see a painting before he starts, I can see this boat in my mind."

He used to say he could see it in the back of his mind. Then, three years ago, everything in the back of his mind shifted forward, like a ship's cargo during a storm, the result of a stroke, a heart attack and an epiphany.

He'd always assumed there would be plenty of time to find Nessie, because he always assumed he'd live to be 84. Every man in the Taylor clan, going back to the Civil War, lived to be 84. Not a year older, not a year younger. But when he found himself in the hospital at 55 years old, Taylor realized not only that he might die before his time, which would be sad, but that he might die before finding his monster, which would be tragic.

So he willed himself to get better, sold his house and moved himself and Margaret into his mother's place on Hilton Head. He sank \$80,000 from the sale of the house into acetylene torches and wire grinders and soldering guns and steel, lots of steel, then rented this airless workshop an hour down the road.

The sun is sailing high in the hazy sky, shining down like the lights of a submarine

make your own electricity or sell whatever you made. Then Congress changed the law, and he had to take it down.

Even before the windmill, she recalls, when Taylor was just 7 years old, he built a crude water craft by rigging empty oil cans to his bike. Pedaling into a nearby pond, he felt confident that the air-filled cans would act as pontoons and keep him afloat. "The second he hit the water, the bike sank."

"I learned a lot about ballast that day," he says.

He wasn't crestfallen about the water bike, nor about the huge windmill that followed years later. Nor the giant aquarium, nor the remote-controlled torpedo, nor the hydroelectric dam, nor any of the elaborate inventions he undertook, most of which failed to live up to expectations. "Nothing I make," he says, beaming with pride, "ever works the first time."

Because the sightings at Loch Ness seem to have begun in the 1930s, that would seem to be when something slithered into the loch from the ocean, says Lisa Wolfinger, a producer for the PBS series "Nova." Wolfinger and a film crew went to Loch Ness last year to make a documentary, due to air next fall. Before going, she counted herself among the majority of people who don't believe in any monster, a group that grew after 1994, when the best-known photograph of the monster, one of the most famous photographs of the 20th century, was revealed to be a hoax.

But after interviewing many eyewitnesses and examining the data, Wolfinger came away convinced. "There's something big in there," she says. "Undoubtedly."

Next June, when the weather conditions are just right and Taylor makes his triumphant return to Loch Ness, Mackal and Wolfinger will be rooting for him, as will Robert H. Rines, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology-trained physicist renowned for inventing radar devices used in everything from warfare to surgery and a dedicated Nessie hunter himself.

"We need all the (Dans) we can get," Rines says.

In 1972 and 1973, Rines used ultrasound and cameras with powerful strobe flashes to obtain the best evidence yet of something big and sleek swimming around Loch Ness, an exotic creature with horns on its head, fins on its sides and a back like an upturned boat. Rines agrees with Mackal that what he saw was probably no monster, but a missing link, if not a zengodion, perhaps an ancient reptile called a plesiosaur, thought by most scientists to be extinct for 65 million years. He bases such an opinion on more than fuzzy photos and radar charts. Like Taylor, he's met the monster.

"It happened June 23rd, 1972," he says. "My late wife, Carol, and a former wing commander in the RAF, Basil Cary, we watched this big back move out against the currents, from the bay into the main part of the loch, then turn round and come back and submerge right in front of us. I'd say about 1,000 feet away. It looked just like the back of an elephant."

Ever since that day, Rines has been an unwavering believer. He's not sure the animals are still alive, particularly since the number of sightings has fallen off in recent years, but he hopes Taylor can at least find a skeleton.

As for Taylor himself, Rines considers him a fellow traveler, another adventurer who sees that dark body of water for what it is—the repository of something primal and thrilling.

"I have a very strong conviction," Rines says, "that at one time there were things in there that shouldn't have been alive."

LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

Euthanasia

An ongoing debate

By Rasheed Al Roussan
Special to The Star

KNOWN AS mercy killing, euthanasia advocates the right of every human to terminate his or her own life when a fatal disease or other terminal condition causes them intolerable suffering.

If we take a look back through history, we find that euthanasia was accepted both legally and morally in many countries. The Greek writer Plutarch mentioned that in Sparta infanticide was practiced on children who lacked "health and vigor." In his famous book "The Republic," Plato emphasized the necessity of killing the elderly, the handicapped and those with deadly diseases in order to build a fully productive and healthy society. Although Plato's utopian ideas are merely academic, euthanasia is still practiced secretly around the world. More recently, in Nazi Germany, there were so-called euthanasia committees which executed anyone who was considered a burden to the state.

Today, the issue of euthanasia is debated extensively by religious leaders across the world. Dr. Abid Al Mu'z Hraiz, who teaches at University of Jordan's Faculty of Shariah, pointed out that Islam is very clear on the issue. "Killing a patient in pain is a clear violation of Islamic morals," he said, adding that every human being has the right to live, ill or healthy; nobody has the right to terminate their own life, which is given and cherished by God. "People who do so are murderers," he said firmly.

Dr. Hraiz stresses that abortion is another form of mercy killing, which Islam resents. "Parents should have thorough medical checkups before conception in order to avoid abortion." He added that euthanasia is prohibited in Islam since it is considered to be suicide, and suicide is a sinful act. He finally states that the rise of elderly homes in western societies is another form of mercy killing. "The Koran orders Muslims to obey their parents. Taking care of your parents is one of the most essential duties of Muslims." As a result when people dump their parents in such homes, they are actually letting them die slowly.

Dr. Qais Sadiq, an archbishop at the Ecumenical Studies Center (ESC) takes a different view. "Mercy killing shouldn't be equated with murder," he said, stating that in Christianity there are different opinions regarding the legitimacy of euthanasia. "The Orthodox Church hasn't yet announced any official declaration on the issue. On the other hand, Catholics have pointed out that mercy killing is a crime that is equal to murder, abortion, and suicide. Protestants have no decisive opinion on the subject," he said. In Reverend Sadiq's own opinion, our lives are sacred, and "we shouldn't terminate what is divine and holy. He added that we must accept pain the way we embrace God's blessings. He stressed that if we practice mercy killing, we will end up dehumanizing people, turning them into machines."

Medical support is the responsibility of the country. "Should we apply and respect democracy, we should expect our country to help those suffering from permanent illnesses. We pay taxes, which should not be financing the fancy cars and luxurious houses of some in power."

Nevertheless, he added that the Catholic Church must deal with the challenges of today's scientific advancement. Euthanasia is one of many issues like cloning and genetic engineering, that are part of the modern world. They are here to stay.

The law also sets strict restrictions on the practice of euthanasia, and in most countries around the globe it is a crime. Dr. Muhammad Nijm, a lecturer at UJ Faculty of Law, explained how some countries deal with mercy killing within the law. "In Jordan, euthanasia is considered as manslaughter, in Syria the sentence is 10 years imprisonment, and in Lebanon it is less severe," he said. Dr. Nijm added in England euthanasia is considered second-degree murder, but ironically, it is not a crime in Germany or Italy. On the other hand, euthanasia has been occurring in Uruguay, where it is legal, on a large scale since 1933.

Dr. Sameeh Abu Al Raghib, head of Forensic Medicine at the UJ hospital, says that euthanasia is practiced abroad on patients suffering from terminal diseases. Patients who are declared medically brain-dead are routinely withdrawn from life-support systems. This kind of routine has nothing to do with euthanasia. "The doctor stated that when the brain stops functioning the person is dead. In the case of coma, however, doctors aren't sure whether a patient will wake up again or not, and there is always a possibility, however slight. The doctor adds that mercy killing is a violation of medical ethics. "Our duty is to cure diseases and save lives, not to end lives," he confirmed.

There is another dimension to the issue—money. Medical services are expensive to many especially those who are in long-term treatment. Some cases of euthanasia occur because the patient simply can not afford the services of hospitals and doctors. The question is whether the country should provide financial support to those people or not?

Psychological support is also important. The doctor also mentioned that family support can prolong a patient's life. "Patients can learn to accept their destiny and integrate into society."

The struggle to legalize euthanasia is ongoing. In the last eight years a pro-euthanasia movement in the US called "Right to die" has gathered support around the country. Laws have been amended to allow competent individuals to make "living wills." These wills empower doctors to withhold life-support if the individual becomes terminally ill. There is always the risk that such laws may be abused, for example a patient's body organs could be sold after he or she dies, against their wishes. Euthanasia will remain a controversial issue. To many, the right to die is as basic as the right to live. ■

Companies working overtime in search for a weight-loss drug

By Paul Jacobs

IN TALL, stainless-steel vats that look like they belong in a microbrewery, Amgen Inc. of Thousand Oaks, Calif., is brewing up batches of what could be a new anti-obesity drug—a naturally occurring human protein now being tested in patients.

At a plant in Nutley, N.J., Hoffmann-La Roche hopes to begin mass-producing a new diet pill called Xenical, the first chemical of a class that blocks the uptake of fats from the digestive system—cutting calories even without a change in diet.

On the heels of discovering several natural chemicals that make rats and mice ravenously hungry, several companies are moving as quickly as they can to develop drugs that can block that effect and suppress appetite in overweight humans.

With more than half the adult population of the United States now labeled "overweight" or "obese," dozens of drug and biotechnology companies are in hot pursuit of new medications designed to shed excess pounds by curbing appetite, blocking digestion of fat or increasing the rate that the body burns calories.

An eruption of discoveries over the last several years has given fire to the chase for a new generation of anti-obesity drugs. The science has delivered an increasingly sophisticated understanding of why some people are insatiable eaters, adding pounds to the detriment of their health, and why others eat whatever they like with impunity.

And in a culture that values the thin—even as the number of overweight Americans creeps steadily upward—a useful weight-loss drug could tap into a vast market, one not limited to those with strong medical reasons to drop extra pounds.

But the wide use of any medication for prolonged periods—perhaps for a lifetime—raises safety questions that are not easily answered in the usual clinical trials.

And because many healthy people will take diet pills for appearance's sake alone, new medications will have to meet higher safety standards than other drugs, said Dr. Rudolph Leibel, an obesity expert and director of molecular genetics at Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons. "You never heard of a person taking a blood-pressure drug or a cholesterol-reducing drug for cosmetic reasons," he said.

Company officials and researchers say

that attitudes about obesity have changed—that carrying an extra layer of fat around the midsection is seen as a significant health problem, not just a question of cosmetics. And for increasing numbers of Americans, cutting calories and increasing exercise—the preferred prescription for dealing with obesity—may well not be enough.

"As a culture, we have to recognize that diet and exercise are not an overwhelmingly effective way to deal with the problem," said Dr. Jeffrey M. Friedman, a Rockefeller University scientist and leading obesity researcher. "There appears to be a biological system that tends to maintain weight."

Excessive weight brings with it added risk of high blood pressure, diabetes, cancer, heart disease and stroke.

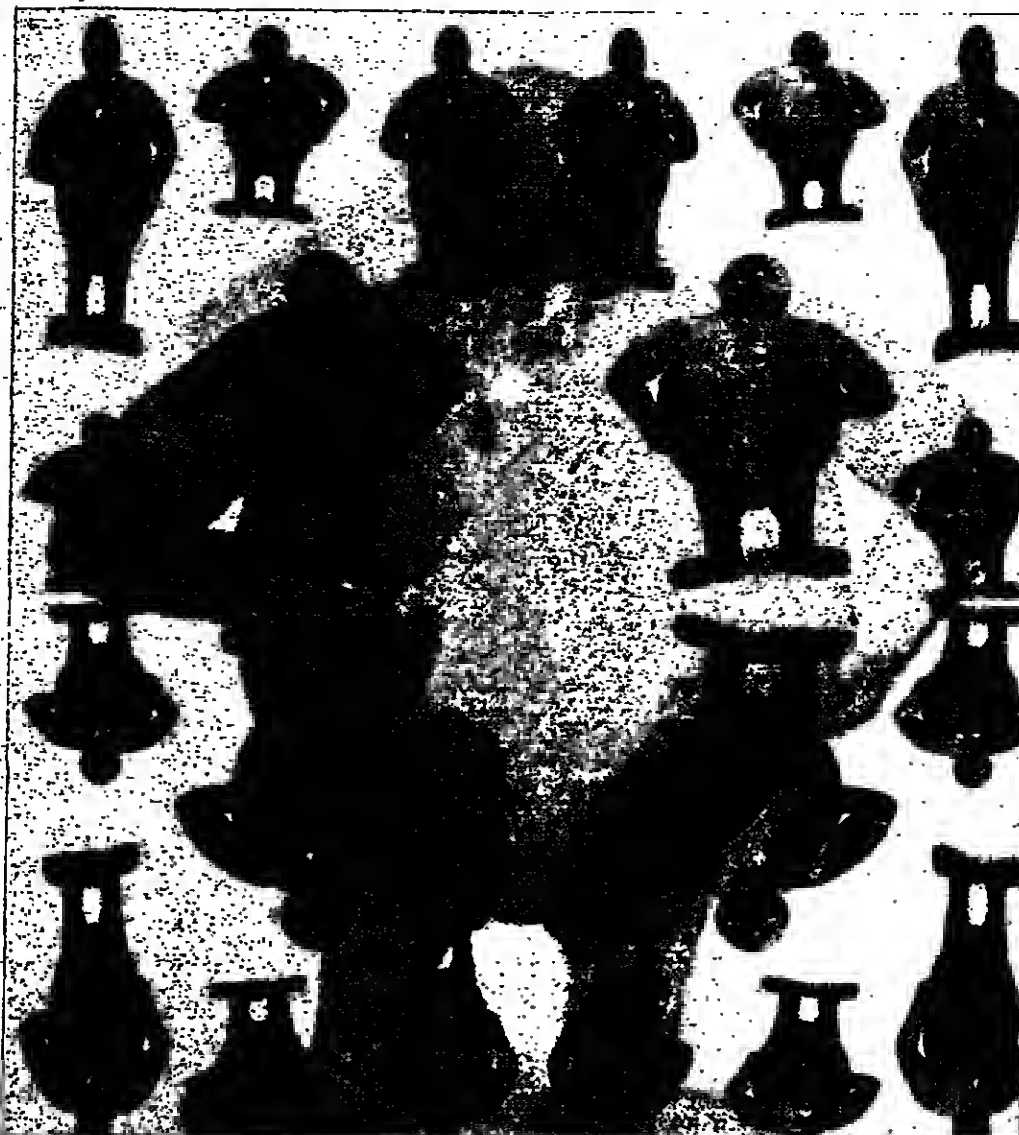
And this year, the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute issued guidelines that redefined "overweight" in a way that classifies 97 million American adults as too heavy—55 percent of the adult population compared to about 35 percent under the older yardstick. The institute put a \$100-billion-a-year price tag on obesity-related disease.

The sheer size of the market has attracted wide interest among companies, said Matthew M. Geller, senior biotechnology analyst with CIBC Oppenheimer. "If you come up with a favorable compound, it could be a multimillion-dollar drug."

But Geller pointed out that developing an obesity drug has proven difficult. "Obesity is a very complicated phenomenon. It is not a disease like chicken pox," he said.

"Health systems and insurers that balked at paying for the male impotence drug, Viagra, would welcome an effective diet drug," said James D. McCamant, editor of the Medical Technology Stock Letter. "There are a large number of people costing the system a lot already and there won't be much reluctance to pay for the drug, if they are effective," he said.

But drug approval can be slow, and many of the experimental drugs under



development are years from the market.

In 1996, when the Food and Drug Administration approved Redux, it was the first new diet medication in 20 years.

Redux remains a cautionary tale on the dangers of seeking weight loss in a pill. The drug was banished from the market last year along with fenfluramine—the "fen" in fen-phen—after researchers linked the medications to heart damage in

obese patients.

Given that experience, companies are likely to be cautious in routing the virtues of new medications as they win regulatory approval.

Early this year, the FDA gave its blessing to Knoll Pharmaceutical Company's Meridia—developed a decade ago as an anti-depressant. It failed to help patients battling depression, but investigators

noticed that the subjects were losing weight.

One problem: in a small number of patients—less than 1 percent—the drug causes a substantial increase in blood pressure. As a result, doctors will have to monitor all patients taking the drug.

Meridia quickly became the highest-grossing diet pill in the United States—with total sales of \$60.8 million from its mid-February launch through May, according to IMS Health. Knoll's parent company estimates worldwide sales could eventually reach as much as \$500 million a year.

Another new drug, still waiting in the wings for final FDA approval, is Xenical from Hoffmann-La Roche. The drug was discovered the old-fashioned way: in a search for drugs that would block an enzyme that breaks down fats and allows them to be digested.

Developing a stable version of the drug and testing it has taken two decades. One concern raised in the tests was a higher incidence of breast cancer among women taking the drug than among those given a placebo.

The company argued that the cancers developed before the volunteers began taking the medication, and in February, the FDA issued "a letter of approvability" for the drug. The company expects final approval early next year, subject to a review of safety data.

But Hoffmann-La Roche is not placing all of its bets on Xenical.

Buoyed by the rush of scientific discoveries, the company, like a number of the world's pharmaceutical giants, is investing in obesity research and forming partnerships with smaller biotech firms in the hunt for pills with minimal side effects.

One of the most stunning of the new findings solved a decades-long mystery. In the 1950s, researchers discovered a mutant strain of obese mice that tipped the scales at three times the weight of their normal brethren.

In 1994, a team of researchers, led by Rockefeller's Friedman, found the reason for the obesity—a defective gene. The scientists identified a hormone present in normal mice—missing in the obese

ones—that plays an important role in limiting food intake and maintaining a target body weight.

They dubbed the hormone, which they found in humans as well as mice, "leptin" after the Greek word for "thin." The obese mice lost weight when injected with the hormone.

Amgen paid Rockefeller \$20 million to license leptin—and agreed to many times that amount if the substance reaches the market, according to Amgen spokesman David Kaye. Using the tools of genetic engineering, the company is growing vast quantities of bacteria that carry the human leptin gene and produce the hormone, which the company purifies for use as a drug.

But leptin is not the perfect weight-loss drug, even if it proves effective. Because it is a protein, which would be broken down in the intestines if taken by mouth, it must be injected.

"Nobody wants to take an injection," said Dr. Michael W. Schwartz, an endocrinologist and obesity researcher at the University of Washington. "Whenever you can avoid that in drug development, that is desirable."

So Amgen and other companies are scrambling to find an oral medication, a small molecule that would survive the digestive system to find its way to leptin's ultimate target: proteins that sit on the surface of nerve cells in an area of the brain that helps regulate appetite. The ideal drug would mimic leptin, making it easier for obese patients to stick to a diet.

In the early 1980s, a team of Rockefeller scientists found another naturally occurring chemical called neuropeptide Y, that, when injected into the brains of laboratory rats, sent the animals into a feeding frenzy.

Now two biotech companies are working with giant pharmaceutical firms to develop small molecules that could be taken by mouth and block the chemical.

Neurogen Corp. in Branford, Conn., is working with Pfizer Inc. on a compound that was tested last year on humans, but the company had to shut down the tests when researchers identified liver changes in healthy, obese volunteers just three weeks into the trials. Pfizer and Neurogen are now looking at similar drugs for possible testing on humans sometime next year.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Women die in Peru sterilisation scandal

By Jane Holligan

LIMA—Compelling evidence that Peruvian government health workers used threats, physical coercion, misinformation and promises of food to meet alleged sterilisation quotas among poor, rural and illiterate women has rocked this Andean nation and caused an international outcry.

Women's rights campaigners claim at least 15 women died from complications while undergoing sterilisations performed improperly or under unsanitary conditions.

The government—which denies it set internal target sand financially rewarded zealous medics—admits culpability in only six of the 15 known deaths. Only two cases have reached the courts, and the state has failed to financially compensate the families of victims—like Juana Rosa Ochoa, a mother of three.

Ochoa was one of the first to die—left alone overnight and in pain with one other patient in the Huaytara Health Centre while medical staff celebrated the end of a successful campaign of rural sterilisations in the town square.

The next morning a doctor returned, diagnosed colic and gave her a suppository before leaving the district. But her father raised the alarm, and an official decided to send her by ambulance to the nearest hospital in the coastal city of Ica, a six-hour journey which was further delayed by a search for a doctor to accompany her.

Ochoa, who died from a perforated intestine, was one of more than 280,000 women sterilised in the last three years—110,000 of them in 1997 alone—in the wake of President Alberto Fujimori's highly publicised announcement in July 1995 legalising state-promoted sterilisation as a method of family planning.

Women's groups in Peru initially welcomed the programme—a controversial move in this traditionally Catholic country—which seemed to offer poor women greater family planning options.

Peru has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the Andean region: 265 for every 100,000 live births in 1997. But abortion is illegal and an estimated 270,000 unsafe abortions are performed each year making it the second leading cause of maternal death. This makes it important for women to have access to safe, effective and voluntary contraceptive use,



including sterilization, women's health advocates say.

By mid-1997 there were signs that the sterilization initiative had lost its way. Rights activists found that many Quechua-speaking women in rural areas—who had no knowledge of Spanish—and women in the shanty towns that ring the capital city, Lima, were systematically misinformed or bribed by medical staff in return for being sterilised.

In the southeastern state of Cuzco, Dolores Quispe and her husband were warned by a nurse that Dolores would be taken to court if she refused. She and eleven other women were locked into a clinic waiting room. Another woman, Felipa Cusi, says she never gave permission for sterilisation. She says she was insulted, threatened and taken by force to the health post where she was thrown on a bed and had one hand and her legs tied down.

In the northern city of Piura, doctors performed an unauthorised sterilisation on Victoria Vigo during an emergency caesarean section delivery. When Vigo's premature baby died she found out that she had been sterilised without her knowledge. Horrified by what happened to her, she says: "How many women are sterilised and don't know it?"

As abuse reports mounted, lawyer Guilla Tamayo and researcher Raquel

Cuentas documented around 200 cases of mostly poor women who claim they sustained injury or were operated on against their will, even when ill or pregnant. Cuentas told Panos Features women as young as 19 were sterilised.

Initially the researchers were reluctant to divulge their findings, and some women's groups—wary of losing state funding or risking a conservative backlash—counseled caution. "They either didn't know or didn't want to know because they didn't want to lose the ground gained in family planning," Cuentas said.

Late last year, Peruvian newspapers and television networks broke the story, uncovering internal memos to hospital staff which revealed the intense pressure put on poorly paid health workers.

The flash point came in February when the president of the Medical Foundation, in the poor southern city of Ayacucho and two women, one of them Vigo, testified before a United States Congressional Subcommittee on International and Human Rights Operations investigating charges that US aid money was misused during the sterilisation campaign.

Congressman Joseph Rees concluded for the hearing: "I don't think there is any question that women in Peru, especially very poor mestizo

(mixed race) women have been misled into having sterilisations, and that, in some cases, they were lied to."

Even though Peruvian law affirms individuals' constitutional right to information in choosing a method of contraception, there have been no high-level resignations in the health ministry. A special prosecutor appointed to centralise and investigate abuse cases has not left Lima, nor has she brought any charges. In the case of Ochoa, brought to court by her family, the operating doctor was found guilty of culpable homicide, given a four-year suspended sentence and ordered to pay damages of only 3,000 soles (\$1,500).

Instead, authorities claim they have rectified flaws. Campaigns to promote sterilisations and recruit women have been abandoned, and a 72-hour waiting period before surgery will be observed in provide time for women to make up their minds, the ministry promises.

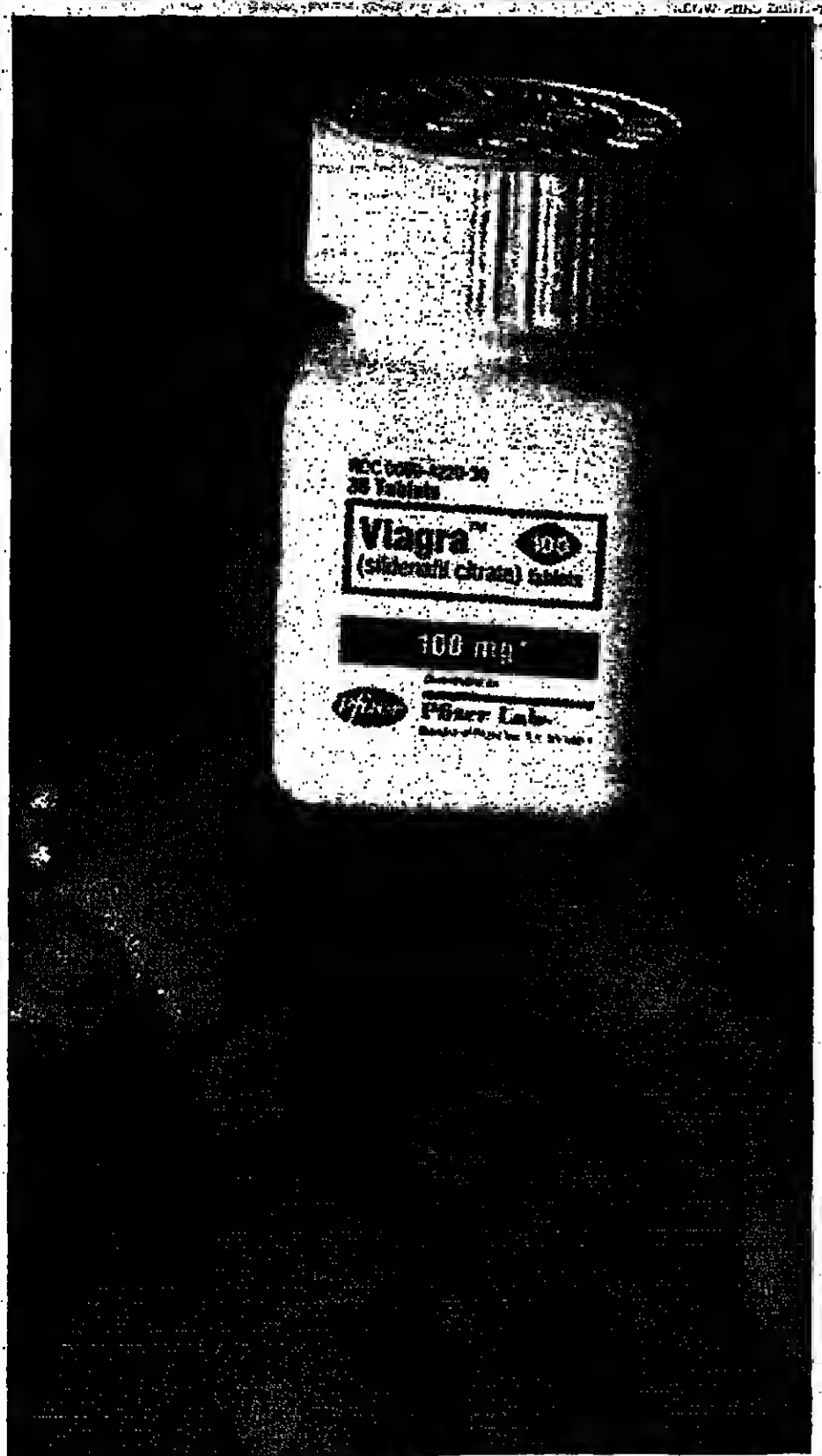
Catholic Church campaigners are also gathering evidence of wrongdoing; however, women's organisations dispute their motives. In a proclamation issued on March eight, International Women's Day, Peru's Comprehensive Women's Movement warned against "... those who today wish to present themselves as defenders of women's rights, but whose actions show them to be the heirs of a long political and religious tradition hostile to the rights and freedoms of women, particularly in the field of reproductive and sexual rights."

The organization calls for a cessation of the quota system in the Reproductive and Family Planning Programme and demands that the government, including President Fujimori, "is accountable to women for decisions hidden from public opinion."

In the scandal's wake many women are rejecting sterilisation - nationally, the number of sterilisation is down by nearly 7 per cent—and demand for any birth control method has dropped by some 30 per cent, which worries women's groups.

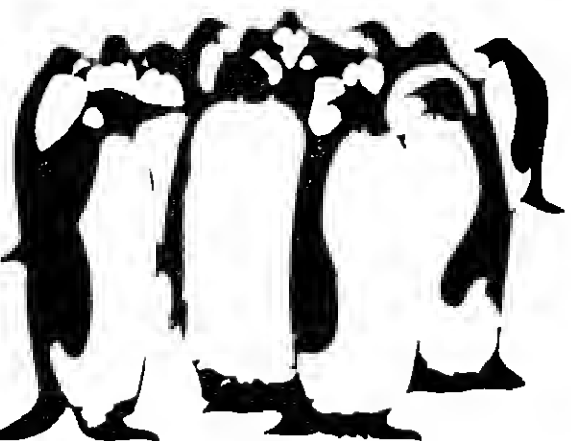
Carlos Aramburu, newly appointed advisor to the family planning programme knows that the mistakes have taken a toll. "It's going to cost us a lot of money and time to recover credibility," he said.

Panos



Fake Viagra is displayed at the Food and Drug Administration in Bangkok 10 August. Thailand's Secretary-General of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Dr Mongkol Na Songkhla in an interview to Reuters 8 August, dismissed reports that Thailand was a major production centre for fake Viagra. The FDA has confiscated hundreds of tablets of the impotence drug, some of which are thought to be fake. The raids at several places took place last week after the FDA pledged to crack down on smugglers and producers of the fake drug after news reports cited Thailand and India as the main sources of fake Viagra sold on the internet.

09.1.17.24

AROUND
TOWNSharing the beauty of art
and culture at Jerash

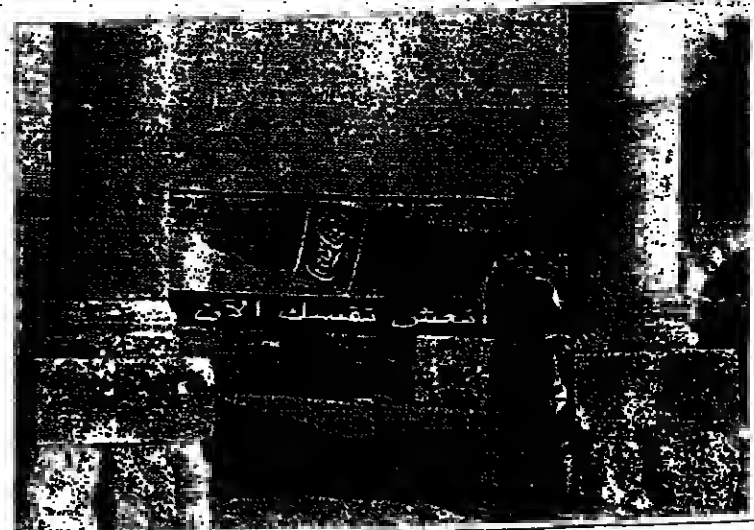
THIS YEAR'S Jerash festival witnessed an interesting array of cultural contributions from around the globe. People traveled hundreds—even thousands—of miles to attend the highly esteemed annual cultural event.

One of the many highlights of Jerash was Mimi Farah's play "Jad in Grandma's Tales," which mesmerized hundreds of children—and adults—at the Light and Sound Theater. Mimi and her troupe, who traveled from Lebanon to bring us their unique project, used different techniques, such as lighting, smoke machines, sound effects and many colorful

characters, such as Dr. Pemberton—the scientist who created the world's most popular soft drink Coca-Cola to delight the audience.

The play showed how Dr. Pemberton first invented the No. 1 soft drink, and created the instantly recognizable Coca-Cola contoured bottle which has been used for over 100 years.

The Jerash festival combined the traditional with the modern, the cultural with the futuristic, and invited the young and the old with open arms to gather for a little fun.

Capturing the splendour
of Jordan through the lens

Jane Taylor, writer and photographer, talks to The Star's reporter Ghassan Joha about her life and her enduring love affair with Jordan

PHOTOGRAPHY IS an interesting hobby for many people, and that is just how Jane Taylor viewed it—a hobby—until, quite by accident, she found herself on 3-month tour alongside a film crew in Turkey in 1972. This was the start of a successful, if unplanned, career in Jordan.

Born in Malaya of British parents, and evacuated to Australia during the Second World War, she did not see England until she was six years old. There she spent most of her childhood on a farm in Sussex, where she developed a love of the countryside and nature. After school, she moved up to Scotland to take a degree in Medieval History and Moral Philosophy at St Andrews University. After graduation, she taught history for about two years, before working as a book publisher for five years.

It was then that she got what some would call itchy feet, and set out to see a bit more of the world. "All of my conscious life had been in Britain," she said, adding that the traveling she had done with her parents as a young child probably inspired her. She went to Turkey in 1971 to teach English which earned her an enough money to live on, as well as writing articles for the British newspaper *The Guardian*.

"At the same time, I was picked up, almost accidentally, by BBC TV and spent the next several months doing research for a wonderful series about the history and art in Turkey." From that point, she started to take photography more seriously. She attributes some of her talent behind the lens to her father, himself a keen photographer.

"I continued writing occasionally for color photo magazines, but as I couldn't afford to take a photographer along, I had to take the photos myself." This inspired her to combine her writing skills with her skill as a photographer.

She, in fact had thought of herself as a writer who happened to take photographs, although people in Jordan tend to think of her more as a photographer because her two publications about this country are largely photographic.

Asked why she chose to live in Jordan, she replies, "There wasn't a single decision to come and live here. The first time I came was in 1978 as a tour manager for a travel agency, and I was enchanted with it," she said, although at that time she had not thought of returning.

In 1984, some Jordanian friends invited her to spend Christmas in Jordan. Of course, she took many photographs, and decided to return a couple more times over the next year, which led to her next major project.

The Ministry of Tourism, with the help of former secretary general Nasir Atalla and the Royal Jordanian Air Force, gave her the chance to take aerial photographs of the major sites in the Kingdom. Amazed at how well the photos turned out, she set about making a book that shows the glories of Jordan.

"It was difficult for me to get a British publisher since there was not much interest in books



Taking notes on the job

about Jordan at that time," she says. "Publishers didn't think it was a good commercial risk. So, I decided to publish it myself, having a lot of orders from the Ministry, banks and other businesses and His Majesty agreed to do a foreword for it, which was wonderful."

When the book came out in April 1989, Ms Taylor decided it would be better come and live in Jordan for a year or so to help with its distribution and promotion. During this period Ms Taylor decided to produce a book on Petra, but bad luck struck.

"In the middle of the work, the Gulf crisis happened." Rather than leave, Ms Taylor stayed in the country and took part in the Evacuees Relief Program. "It was an extraordinary time where people were working together in such good spirit, despite the difficulties, and I was very happy to have the privilege of taking part in that. I think that by sharing some of the bad times in a country it becomes more precious to you."

Ms Taylor also visited Iraq a couple of times to take photos for UNICEF and other relief agencies, "to show the enormous problems people there have been under since the embargo and because of the war." This tragedy postponed the publication of her Petra book, but unlike her first book, this time she eventually found a British publisher to take the financial risk of publication in 1993.

After more than 9 years in Jordan, Ms Taylor is extremely positive about the enjoyment of living and working here. "I've always had whatever help I've needed." She considers herself very fortunate to have been able to do the aerial photography, for example. She adds, "Everyone says that if you want to be a writer, you need to have a private income and that, unfortunately, I don't have, so I've had to try very hard, but it is certainly a fascinating way to spend your life."

All photographers try to show things in a new way. Ms Taylor found that aerial photography in particular often throws new light on why things were constructed a certain way, or in a certain place. It is this way of putting buildings in context in their landscape that she really enjoys.

She also likes to take pictures of people, however, again in context with the landscape. For example, she does not particularly like taking pictures of tourists; but to

photograph the Bedouin in a place like Petra seems appropriate as they belong in that context.

Always on the go, Ms Taylor is currently working on a book about the Nabateans. She has been recently to the Hijaz to visit Mada'in Saleh (Cities of Salt), about 360 kilometres north of Madinah in Saudi Arabia, where the Nabateans created a similar city to Petra. She has also been to the Negev desert to look at the Nabatean cities there. Her next book will

include some sites not mentioned in her previous books, like Khirbet Al-Tanour in Wadi Hassa. The book should be published in the summer 2000.

Ms Taylor is the author of two other titles: *Imperial Istanbul*, a guidebook to the Turkish capital. The other, about the Bustama of the Kalahari Desert in southern Africa was written in collaboration with Laurens van der Post, entitled *Testament to the Bushmen*.



Hot-air balloons soar over Wadi Rum

Photo by Jane Taylor

Drawing
competition

THE FRIENDS OF Archaeology and the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, are organizing a drawing competition for children entitled "Protecting Archaeological Sites in Jordan." This competition, which will be part of the first National Heritage Week, is an attempt to stress the importance of protecting our archaeological heritage for children, with a special emphasis on the relationship between historical sites and communities throughout various eras in history.

But there are conditions. Children should be between the ages of 4 and 14; the drawings should reflect the child's concepts concerning the protection of ruins in Jordan, and the drawing should be same size as a school "drawing book" or bigger.

More than one child can

cooperate on any drawing and any artistic material can be used such as pastels, water colors, oil, pottery, wood, metal, or any other material or technique.

Signs or mottos to explain the theme of the work are also requested. One child can enter two pieces of work maximum.

The following information should be marked on the back of the drawing: Name, age, sex, birth date, school, address, and a 4x6cm photo.

The final date for receiving drawings is 10 September 1998 at the following address: Ministry of Culture, Children's Culture Dept., P.O. Box 6140, Amman. For more information please call: 5624652.

Work will be judged by a panel and prizes will be offered to winners. All participants will receive certificates.

British Airways'
Waterside business park
showcases latest hi-tech
business solutions

THE BRITISH Prince of Wales officially opened British Airways' state-of-the-art £200 million Waterside business park near Heathrow and tried his hand at "hot desking" and "hot working" some of the innovative ways of working in a "business built" leading edge building.

Designed to be a catalyst for change across the airline, Waterside signals a new era of work practices using the latest technology and work place design to take the airline into the 21st century.

During a tour of one of the most radical new office buildings in Europe this decade and the biggest single-company office development in the UK during the 1990's, the Prince got first-hand experience of the latest office techniques that are transforming the working lives of the centre's 2,800 employees.

The Prince was met at Waterside by Sir Colin Marshall and Bob Ayling, British Airways' Chairman and Chief Executive respectively, and by Chris Byron, Project Director for Waterside.

During his 75-minute tour, he visited many of the center's facilities and "hot desk" at a shared workspace in the Relationship Marketing department's workplace.

There, he got first-hand experience of the airline's internet system, trying out the latest information technology systems that enable people to work at a desk, from home, in one of the building's cafes, or outside in the park.

The Prince also took in the 240-acres of parkland around the building—the biggest new park and nature reserve created in London this century, complete with 70,000 newly-planted trees.

The Prince met Niles Torp, the Norwegian architect who won the competition to design the building, members of the airline's Community Relations team, and employees who play a special part in local communities.

The building uses a village concept of streets and neighborhoods. Six four-storey buildings, each with its own individually-styled courtyard, are arranged on either side of a 175-meter long glazed atrium known as "The Street."

All staff and directors, including Bob Ayling, work in an open plan environment.

At Waterside, people can order their weekly shopping electronically from an in-house supermarket, and keep trim and neat at a fitness center and hairdresser. Although the restaurants only accept "cashless vending cards," the building also houses a bank and, for those last-minute celebrations, there's a flower shop.

Ayling said "Waterside is a truly remarkable achievement in many ways, in its architecture, in the new ways of working that it is stimulating and in the reclamation of waste land into a valuable amenity for our employees and our neighbors."

A £10 million investment in the latest information technology enables people to work in new ways designed to speed up business processes, improve information flow and minimize the use and storage of paper. Many communication tasks are performed electronically via e-mail, electronic diaries, forms and manuals and shared databases.

By making better use of laptop computers and digital mobile phones, people can work anywhere in the building, at home or around the world, accessing the company network via modem link and wireless LAN.

An intensive multi-media and interactive training program, centred around Waterside's own "university," continues to equip people to exploit the benefits of their new environment and adopt more efficient ways of working.

Waterside forms a key element of British Airways' strategy to deliver enhanced customer services and significant cost savings and productivity gains on a global basis of £15 million a year as it gears up for a new era in competitive world travel.

The "residents" are drawn from across the country's commercial, strategic, and central departments, formerly spread across 14 different buildings. All the company's employees will use its extensive training facilities.

Construction began on the Waterside complex in February 1996, with the first people moving into the building in December last year, making it one of the largest and fastest completed building projects of its kind in the UK.



Capturing Jordan's major sites from the air

The Star's GUIDE

Programs on JTV
from 13—19 August

ENGLISH PROGRAMS

THURSDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Animated Hero Classics (Cartoon)
3:30—Animal Park (Cartoon)
4:00—L'Ecole Des Fans
4:30—Blue Water Dreaming (Documentary)
5:00—NBA
6:15—Siders
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Prog.
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Family Matters (Com)
8:00—Great Romances of the 20th Century
8:30—Dr Quinn Medicine Woman (Drama)
9:10—Oprah Winfrey
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Film
12:00—Can't Hurry Love

FRIDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—The Adventures of Teddy Ruxpin (Cart.)
3:30—The Borrowers
4:00—Film: "Fire Over England"
6:15—Les Cles De Fort Boyard (Quiz)
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Prog.
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Fresh Prince of Bel Air
8:00—Life on the Digital Edge
8:30—Understanding Computing
9:10—Babylon 5
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—When Love Kills (Mini Series, pt. 2 of 2)

SATURDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Family Dog (Cartoon)
3:30—Crowning Around
4:00—Neighbours (Drama)



The Album Show, Wednesday at 4:00 pm.

4:30—Scandi Nature (Doc.)
5:00—French Prog.
6:00—Acropolis Bay
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Prog.
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—You Bet Your Life
8:00—Cinema, Cinema
8:30—Prison (Talk Show)
9:10—Sirens (Drama)
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Film
12:00—Country Music

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Pink Panther (Cart.)
3:30—Pumpkin Patch
3:30—The Adventures of

4:30—Scandi Nature (Doc.)
5:00—American Chart Show
5:00—The Natural World
6:00—French Program
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Prog.
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Life's Most Embarrassing Moments
8:00—People Count
8:30—Challenges
9:00—Renege (Drama)
10:00—News in English
10:30—Film
12:10—Birth of Rock & Roll

MONDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Rugby (Cartoon)



Amman cinemas

- Philadelphia I (Tel: 4634149): The Man in the Iron Mask
- Philadelphia II (Tel: 4634149): Al Za'eem (Arabic)
- Galleria I (Tel: 079 33430): Al Za'eem (Arabic)
- Galleria II (Tel: 079 33430): Goodwill Hunting
- Plaza (Tel: 5699238): Al Za'eem (Arabic)
- Concord I (Tel: 5677420): A Letter to the Governor
- Concord II (Tel: 5677420): Dumb & Dumber

3:30—The Worst Day Of My Life (Drama)
4:00—Neighbours (Drama)
4:30—Last Frontiers (Doc.)
5:00—French Program
6:00—Acropolis Bay
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Program
7:30—News Headlines
8:00—Perspective
8:30—What's your poison?
9:10—Good Guys, Bad Guys
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Film
11:10—Bay Watch Nights

9:10—Kung-Fu
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Chicago Hope

PROGRAMMES EN FRANCAIS

JEUDI
16:00—L'école des fans
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine L'oeuf de Colomb

VENREDI
18:15—Fort Boyard
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—AD6 la Terre

SAMEDI
17:00—Faut pas rêver
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine L'oeuf de Colomb

DIMANCHE
18:00—Bonne espérance
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—E-M6

LUNDI
17:00—Thalassa
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine scientifique

MARDI
18:00—Les cœurs brûlés
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Fractales

MERCREDI
17:00—Ushuaia
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—E-M6
20:00—Envoyé spécial

Programs are subject to change by JTV

FILM

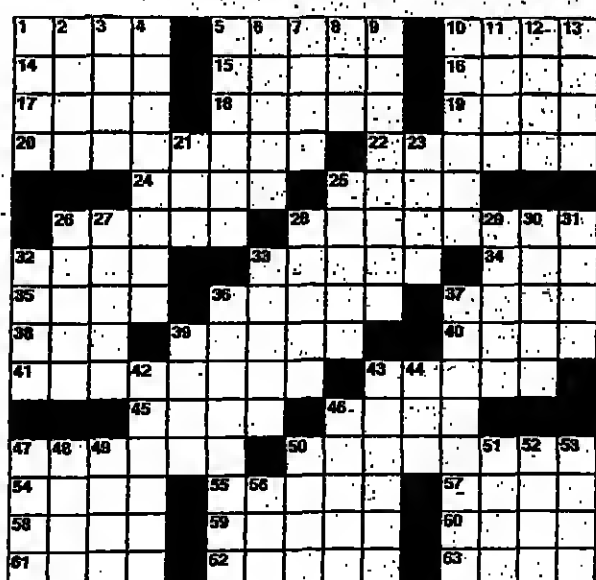


The Big Lebowski

Jeff Lebowski, The Dude (Jeff Bridges) is the laziest man in Los Angeles. Maybe the world. Which is why he's in for one hell of a shock when he gets home one afternoon to find two mean gangster types in his apartment.



CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Across
1 Concluding musical section
5 Twinges
10 Russian planes
14 General Bradley
15 Coast
16 Seagull land
17 State
18 Director Frank
19 Was aware
20 Tennis shoes
22 Typewriter roller
24 Penny
25 Sustenance
26 Manual training system
28 Grotesque carving
32 Like tame horses
33 Overused
34 Lubricate
35 Flier
36 Graceful

Down
2 Arabians' sustenance
4 Part of a telephone number
5 Climb
6 Graph
7 Bear ingratiation
8 Coccyz
9 Shipping carriers
10 Gilbert & Sullivan work (with "The")
11 What "ain't" should be
12 Kind of club
13 Silenced
21 Vital element
23 Theater section
25 Indistinct position
26 Para
27 Sweetheart
28 Vouchsafe
29 "the top"
30 Napsy
31 NV town

37 Bad mood
38 "Mara"
39 Assigned task
40 Cookie
41 Shopkeeper
42 Tangram
43 Cable
44 Chew the fat
45 Where Lotz
46 Emblem of Ireland
47 Fire
48 Frequently
49 A Fitzgerald
50 Container for liquor
51 Stock exchange position
52 Walrol
53 Printer options
54 A few
55 DOWN
56 Wheel teeth

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-This Week's- HOROSCOPES

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: This is the last week the sun's in Leo. Leo is a wild, enthusiastic sign, interested in sports and all kinds of outdoor activities.

Aries (March 21-April 19). Stay close to home and entertain your sweetheart there, for an excellent romantic interlude.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). Run errands. You'll find some excellent bargains, specifically because you're looking for them.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). Save your money, gather in more and figure out your budget. You'll have a chance to teach and learn, perhaps simultaneously.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). You've got a lucky streak going. You're strong and good looking. Go buy yourself something you've been wanting.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). Finish up old business, specifically paying off old debts. You're awesome.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Your friends show you all kinds of ways to save money. Talk to them about that. You'll learn so much that you can afford to take them all out to lunch.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Pay attention to protocol. You'll have to play catch-up if you left anything out, and that would be a real tragedy.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Business travel looks excellent. If you can't get away, at least make the contacts.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Think about your future. It won't hurt to have a little stashed away. These are good days to buy provisions, if you're going to go backpacking.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Try to avoid arguments about money. The other person's way too emotional and not nearly logical enough to understand your reasoning.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Rely on your partner to handle work you don't like. That'll give you more time to do something you're good at.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). Your work load is intense. Save some time for romance. It's most important to make the connection now.

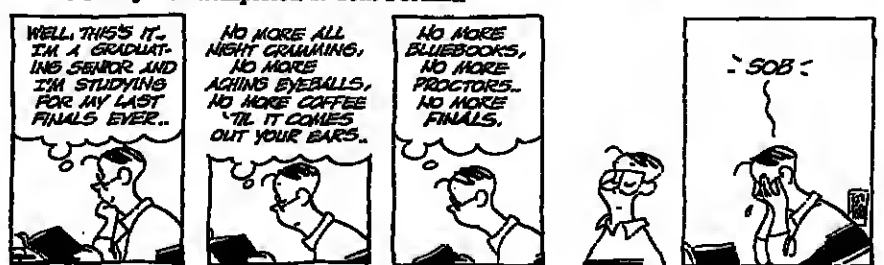
If You're Having a Birthday This Week: A friend can help you heal an old hurt this year. Once that's complete, the path to new romance is open.

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PERKY & BEANZ by Russell Myers



ELWOOD by Ben Templeton & Tom Forman



CATFISH by Fred Wagner & Tom Cone



Trivia Treat



WHAT WAS IRONIC ABOUT NURSE AND HOSPITAL REFORMER FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE'S OWN HEALTH?

WHAT WAS USED TO ERASE LEAD PENCIL MARKS BEFORE RUBBER CAME INTO USE?

WHY WAS LUCY HAYES (WIFE OF PRESIDENT RUTHERFORD B. HAYES) KNOWN AS "LEMONADE LUCY"?

WHO WERE BEAVER AND THE TRAPPERS? DURING PROHIBITION, WHAT DID MANY OF THE BREWERIES DO?

ANSWERS: 1. She was a hypochondriac and was convinced she had heart disease. 2. White House. 3. A wide band that they had. 4. She was a temperance advocate and was convinced she had heart disease. 5. They were beaver and the trappers. 6. They were beaver and the trappers.

Words of Wisdom

An insightful question about a problem is the first step toward a solution.

Getting along with others is the art of making small sacrifices.

When the going gets tough, the tough go to lunch.

In business, one deals with probabilities, not certainties.

You do not have to see eye to eye in order to walk arm in arm.

Ambition without aim promotes dissatisfaction.

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CHARLIE



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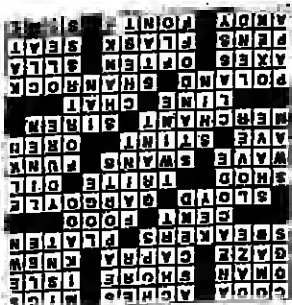
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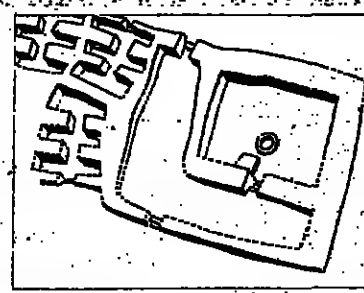
05.1.17.20

Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Les maisons de Beidha : du rond au rectangle par Veronique Abu-Nijm

À quelques kilomètres au nord de Pétra, le site de Beidha s'ouvre à notre curiosité comme un livre qui raconterait en six chapitres comment, il y a 9000 ans, l'habitat de l'homme a évolué de la hutte à la maison rectangulaire à plusieurs pièces et même plusieurs étages. Le village était florissant dans la première période du néolithique (c'est-à-dire la période de l'âge de Pierre qui ne connaissait pas encore la céramique) entre 7000 et 6500 av. J.-C. Il était établi au bord d'un torrent saisonnier, sur une terrasse soutenue par un long mur d'environ un mètre de hauteur qui, surmonté des façades des maisons, devait constituer une sorte de rempart. On accédait au village par une route d'escaliers. Les fouilles ont dégagé six niveaux d'habitations où se déploie l'évolution architecturale en trois phases : le hameau était d'abord constitué de petites maisons rondes, à demi enterrées et serrées les unes contre les autres comme les alvéoles d'un nid d'abeilles. Ces premières



habitations furent détruites par le feu, ce qui a certainement incité les villageois à rechercher d'autres méthodes de constructions. La deuxième phase se caractérise donc par des bâtisses isolées, d'une seule pièce, à peu près rectangulaires mais avec des angles très arrondis. Et dans une troisième phase, une fois maîtrisée la technique du chaînage des murs à angle droit, apparaissent des maisons rectangulaires (voir ci-contre à gauche) à plusieurs pièces séparées de murs très épais. Certaines d'entre elles ont deux étages. Se dessinent alors des rues et un urbanisme de base. Cette évolution reflète du progrès technique mais aussi du changement au sein de la société : la maison rectangulaire peut désormais abriter des familles élargies. Le groupe social se structure. L'artisanat devient une activité spécialisée. C'est ainsi que Beidha représente un site unique dans tout le Proche et Moyen-Orient pour l'étude du néolithique. Ses vestiges sont bien conservés et intéressants pour les visiteurs.

Une fois de plus, l'avenir de la presse est menacé par une loi liberticide.

Éclaboussures

Jérash, notre Festival

Comme beaucoup de phénomènes dans notre société, le Festival de Jérash a pris la forme d'une vieille habitude, un rite voire une manie qui semble difficile à améliorer ou à corriger. Malgré ses 17 ans, le Festival n'a pas réussi à développer les arts en Jordanie. Certes, sa dix-septième édition s'est terminée sur le succès indéniable du chanteur saoudien Abdullah qui a fait Théâtre Sud comble : un soulagement pour le directeur qui s'était inquiété de la baisse de fréquentation au début des trois semaines.

Or l'idée d'origine du Festival de Jérash, rappelons-le, était non seulement de favoriser le tourisme dans l'antique cité, mais aussi d'encourager les groupes jordaniens et étrangers. Au bout du compte, Jérash n'attire pas vraiment les nouveaux talents du royaume (tâche qui semble dévolue aux festivals de moindre importance) et a revêtu au fil des années une vocation régionale limitée au seul domaine de la chanson. Les organisateurs étaient sans doute séduits par l'aspect financier : un grand nom, ce sont des rentrées d'argent assurées, contrairement à un groupe sérieux mais étranger. Cette année, j'en suis allé voir la troupe polonaise *Mazowiec*, célèbre et d'un niveau remarquable. Eh bien, la direction du Festival a permis aux gens d'entrer gratuitement afin d'avoir une « vue publique » et de ne pas être embarrassés auprès de « nos amis polonais ».

Jérash devrait être une fête populaire fréquentée par des centaines de milliers de Jordaniens et pas seulement quelques dizaines de milliers. Sommes-nous un peuple sans aucun goût pour les arts ? Je ne le pense pas mais le Festival moyen est réaliste : les billets d'entrée au Festival sont trop chers alors il y a regardé à deux fois avant de s'y rendre.

Enfin, les habitants de Jérash ont largement l'impression d'être mis à l'écart de « leur Festival », sauf peut-être les commerçants et les propriétaires de parkings. La mairie, en effet, n'y participe pas vraiment de manière active. Pourquoi ne pas imaginer de redistribuer un certain pourcentage des entrées à la ville ?

Néanmoins cette manifestation et ses principaux organisateurs méritent salutation et estime. Si nous formulons des critiques, ce n'est pas ici pour dénigrer ou sous-estimer les efforts appréciables déployés pendant des mois mais par souci de voir notre Festival plus fréquenté et plus réussi. Que les groupes locaux soient davantage favorisés, que la gestion financière connaisse davantage de transparence, bref, que ce Festival devienne l'avenir de tous. Grand merci et rendez-vous en 1999 pour la XVIIIème édition.

Suleiman Sweiss

Retrouvez le Jourdain chaque semaine sur internet <http://star-arabia.com>

Presse et Publications

Liberté en peau de chagrin

La Chambre des députés a adopté cette semaine la nouvelle loi sur la presse et les publications. Une loi, qui, après amendements, s'avère plus dure que le texte de 1993.

« C'est le plus beau de la loi... Le député islamiste Abdallah Akayleh n'a pas caché son enthousiasme à la lecture de l'article 5 selon lequel « les publications doivent respecter la vérité et s'abstenir de publier tout ce qui contredit les prin-

cipes de la liberté, de la responsabilité nationale, des droits de l'homme et des valeurs de la nation arabe et islamique ». Ce député a semblé-t-il la mémoire courte puisqu'on retrouve presque intégralement cet article dans la loi de 1993.

On y retrouve aussi les mêmes formules ambiguës et généralistes. À part les droits de l'homme qui sont bien définies dans des conventions internationales, comment définir la « vérité », la responsabilité nationale ou « les valeurs arabes

et islamiques » ? Des formules pareilles pourraient être utilisées par le gouvernement pour harceler les journaux de l'opposition.

Un cru 98 corsé

En outre, si dans l'ensemble, la nouvelle loi est calquée sur celle de 93 (elles possèdent quasiment le même nombre d'articles), les nuances ne manquent pas.

Elle prévoit notamment une augmentation du capital pour les quotidiens à 500.000 JD contre 50.000 en 1993, et 100.000 JD au lieu de 15.000 pour les hebdomadaires.

Le nouveau texte précise le statut du correspondant étranger ce qui était presque négligé, il y a 5 ans.

Pour occuper les fonctions de rédacteur en chef, un journaliste devra désormais avoir huit ans d'expérience derrière lui, contre dix dans le projet initial, et aucune précision dans la loi de 93.

À la liste des « abus », se sont ajoutés deux autres interdictions : celle de s'attaquer au système judiciaire et celle d'inciter à la grève ou à la manifestation illégale.

Par rapport à 1993, la nouvelle loi prévoit des amendes beaucoup plus lourdes : de 5000 à 10.000 dinars contre 500 à 1500 dinars.

Enfin, il n'est plus fait mention, comme c'était le cas dans la loi précédente, de l'obligation pour l'Etat de verser plus de 30% de ses parts dans les



Une fois de plus, l'avenir de la presse est menacé par une loi liberticide.

Centres de recherche en ligne de mire

Malgré les amendements, le projet de loi sur la presse et les publications conserve son caractère répressif et anti-démocratique. Cela est vrai pour les articles qui réglementeront la liberté de la presse mais aussi pour celui qui concerne les activités des centres de recherche et des instituts de sondages. Il est en effet stipulé dans ce fameux article 46 que centres et instituts n'ont désormais plus le droit de recevoir une aide, un don ou un financement d'un organisme jordanien. En cas de non-respect de la loi, le directeur du Département de la presse et des publications peut décider la fermeture du centre contenant pendant trois à six mois et imposer une amende exorbitante.

Les organismes jordaniens ont donc du souci à se faire puisque, souvent, ils font appel à l'aide étrangère pour conduire leurs études et leurs recherches. Une inquiétude d'autant plus grande que l'article 46 nourrit l'incertitude pour deux raisons. Premièrement, l'ouverture politique et économique au monde extérieur est une stratégie durable de la Jordanie. Aussi une partie importante des déficits budgétaires est toujours comblée par des dons étrangers (notamment de l'Union européenne et des États-Unis). Deuxièmement, les pouvoirs publics ont déjà un certain contrôle sur les activités

des centres et des instituts puisqu'aucune publication ne peut être imprimée et distribuée au public sans passer par la censure. De même, les conférences, séminaires, ateliers et sondages ne peuvent avoir lieu sans l'autorisation du Ministère de l'Intérieur.

Alors pourquoi le gouvernement s'acharne-t-il sur eux ? Cherchant à leur couper les vivres et donc à les affaiblir ? Il s'agit surtout, semble-t-il, de réduire la marge de liberté d'expression et de recherche, non seulement des centres mais aussi des partis politiques, des organisations de femmes, des associations culturelles et sociales ou des intellectuels, qui sont les principaux utilisateurs et invités des centres de recherche.

L'article 46 a bien été amendé par la Chambre des députés mais dans un sens encore plus défavorable. Les parlementaires ont voté l'interdiction de tout financement qu'il soit d'origine jordanienne ou étrangère, sauf accord du ministre de l'Information. Dans ces conditions, les centres de recherche et les instituts de sondage devront sacrifier leur indépendance pour survivre et se contenter dans le sillage du gouvernement pour espérer bénéficier d'un minimum « d'aide » financière.

Hussein Abu-Rumman

Le Moyen-Orient dans la presse française

Processus de paix : faut-il renoncer à Oslo

Un article sur la destinée d'Israël est publié en première page du Monde diplomatique dans son édition du mois d'août. Le rédacteur du dossier, Ignacio Ramonet, commence par énumérer les réussites d'Israël dans différents domaines : technologie, éducation, agriculture... Mais il s'interroge aussi sur l'avenir d'une société plus que jamais « saisie par le doute, désorientée, détraquée et divisée en une mosaïque multiculturelle ». L'analyse traite également du processus de paix et parle d'un « espoir apparu en 1993, mais depuis que Netanyahu est Premier ministre, la situation s'est dégradée ». Selon lui, Netanyahu (notre photo) « a ruiné le projet de paix et multiplié les provocations ». L'auteur fait ici référence à « l'implantation de colonies juives dans la partie arabe » et au « projet d'étendre à nouveau la ville Sainte en complétant sur la Cisjordanie ».

Dans cette même édition, Edward Said propose de s'engager sur une troisième voie pour débloquer le processus de paix : « Maintenant qu'Oslo s'est révélé foncièrement insipide et impraticable, il sert pour le moins souhaitable que les défenseurs arabes, israéliens et autres de cet accord se décident à faire un effort de clarté ». Cette troisième voie se démarquerait aussi bien de « la faillite d'Oslo que des politiques rétrogrades de boycottage » et nécessite surtout « d'être conçue en termes de citoyenneté et non de nationalisme ». Il conclut son article en appelant de ses vœux un combat pour « l'égalité des

droits, pour un Etat ou une République dont tous les membres sont citoyens égaux » et vivent ensemble.

« Au cours de ces huit dernières années, le président irakien s'est montré incapable de comprendre les termes du marché proposé au vaincu de la guerre du Golfe, il n'a pas su en mesurer les possibilités et tourner ce marché à son profit ». Par ces quelques critiques se termine un dossier publié dans le Monde, le 11 août, sur la nouvelle crise entre l'Irak et l'ONU. Depuis le 4 août, le premier refuse à nouveau de travailler avec le second. Selon le journaliste Gilles Paris, six mois après le coup de force de Kofi Annan, le secrétaire général de l'ONU, « l'impasse reste totale entre les deux parties ».

Le Magazine des Français expatriés consacre sept pages dans son édition d'août à Beyrouth. Selon le mensuel, la capitale libanaise a retrouvé cette année « sa place de véritable plaque tournante de la francophonie au cœur du Moyen-Orient ». Le prochain sommet de la francophonie qui se tiendra justement à Beyrouth en 2001 confirmera « sa vocation de cœur francophone ». L'agence universitaire de la francophonie, dont le siège est à Montréal, a d'ailleurs ses antennes au Liban avec divers projets en cours représentés par 60 classes de français renforcés.

Revue de presse réalisée par Nahed Al-Khlout



Étincelles du rugby jordanien à Chypre

L'équipe hachémite était l'attraction du tournoi international de rugby à dix qui se déroulait la semaine dernière sur une base britannique de Chypre. Les Jordaniens ne se sont pas contentés d'assurer l'exotisme, ils sont revenus avec des résultats probants.



John Fenn a été l'un des grands animateurs d'un jeu jordanien, fondé sur la vitesse d'exécution.

« Squeeeeeeeeee ! ». S'identifient et réagissent, le cri de guerre de l'équipe de Jordanie est lancé comme une torpille au milieu du cercle resserré, comprimé, des joueurs bras dessous, bras dessus. L'étreinte est courte mais puissante et volontaire, comme avant chaque début de match. Les « petits » intriguent un peu dans un tournoi de rugby à dix (le rugby standard se joue normalement à quinze) dominé par les équipes de l'armée britannique et de la Royal Air Force (RAF).

Du rugby en Jordanie, comment est-ce possible ? Alors le cri d'engagement d'avant-remonte fait un peu sourire sous les tentes militaires qui longent le terrain central et où se préparent les équipes. Mais les Jordaniens entraînent les points et tout doucement la curiosité descendante fait place à une cer-

taine inquiétude. Dans leur poule, les Verts et Noirs ont été particulièrement efficaces avec deux victoires et une seule défaite, contre les tenants du titre, les jeunes de moins de 21 ans de l'armée britannique, sur le score plus qu'honorable de 24 à 7. Ces sept points furent les seuls que les jeunes affilés ont encaissés avant de perdre la Coupe finale.

En terminant à la deuxième place de son groupe, les Jordaniens ont accédé au tournoi secondaire, directement en quart de finale. Ils ont alors livré contre une formation de la RAF l'une des plus belles batailles du tournoi. Après le temps réglementaire, les deux équipes étaient à égalité 5-5. Comme le but en Or en football, la première à marquer des points dans les prolongations était vainqueur. Ce fut la Jordanie qui a inscrit un essai de toute beauté par son centre

John Fenn transperçant la défense adverse. En demi-finale, les « petits » n'ont pu renouveler leur exploit face à une équipe solide en mêlée et dans les affrontements des avants. S'installant 19 à 7, les Jordaniens sont sortis du terrain sous les applaudissements d'un public acquis à la cause d'une nation inédite au sein la grande famille du rugby.

Vague de chaleur. À leurs côtés, les formations roumaine et suédoise mettaient également un peu d'exotisme dans une compétition aux couleurs militaires. Le tournoi se déroulait en effet sur la base britannique d'Akrotiri, située dans une des baies de l'île. Sous une chaleur écrasante (plus de 40 degrés) et une humidité étouffante (plus de 125%), les organisateurs des joueurs ont souffert même si toutes les rencontres ont été

jouées en fin d'après-midi ou en début de soirée. La semaine dernière en effet, une vague de chaleur s'est abattue sur l'île méditerranéenne, qui a fait une quinzaine de victimes.

Grâce à ses bonnes performances à Chypre, le rugby jordanien présente un visage encourageant pour l'avenir. Si les effectifs sont encore largement constitués d'expatriés venus de grandes nations rugbyistiques (France, Nouvelle-Zélande, Angleterre), les débutants du royaume hachémite sont, de plus en plus nombreux à pointer le bout de leur nez aux entraînements. À Chypre, presque la moitié de l'équipe était composée de Jordaniens : pur sucre. Mais il reste encore beaucoup d'efforts à faire dans un pays où le rugby est encore trop souvent confondu avec le football américain.

Y. L.



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Document

Dans l'ombre des traces de la Palestine

Abu Daoud est un ancien fedayin. Gilles Du Jonchay, un journaliste. Ils ont coopéré plus de trois ans ensemble pour essayer de dégager une histoire du mouvement palestinien. Une œuvre de longue haleine pour faire avancer la vérité.

Le Palmier philosophe d'Amman

Bonhomme. C'est certainement le premier adjectif qui vient à l'esprit pour décrire Abu Daoud. La voix est grave et tranquille comme un wadi. Dans son ensemble, chemise-pantalon bleu clair, on dirait un infirmier sur le point de rassurer un patient.

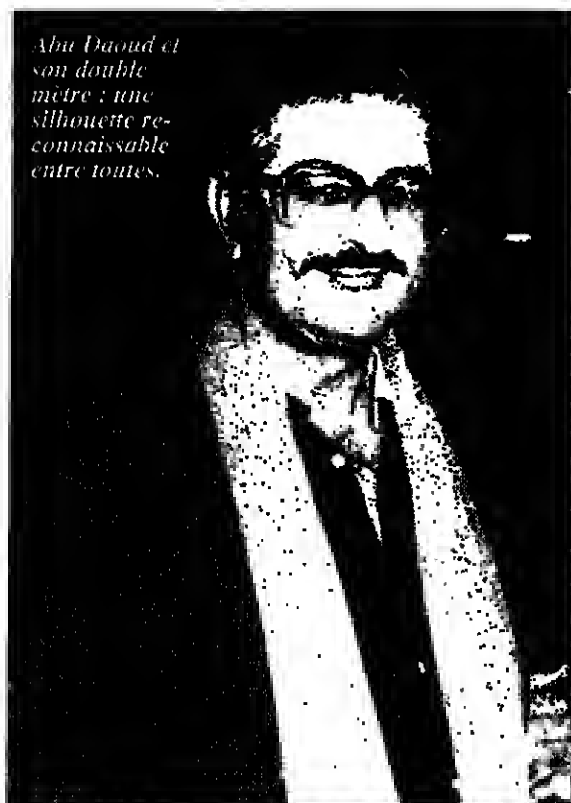
n'est pas du goût de la famille royale et des Jordaniens qui craignent que les Palestiniens s'emparent de leur terre pour constituer un État. Pourtant, selon Abu Daoud, les dirigeants de l'OLP n'y songent à aucun moment. Yasser Arafat lui confie même cette interrogation ironique : « Est-ce que tu crois vraiment que j'ai envie d'être responsable des égarés d'Amman ? ». Les Palestiniens quittent finalement la Jordanie.

Quelques temps plus tard, le Palmier d'Amman, tel qu'on le surnomme à l'époque en raison de son double mètre et de sa silhouette imposante, est de retour à Amman. Abu Daoud est aussitôt arrêté par l'armée jordannaise puis gracié par le roi Hussein en septembre 1973 : « Il savait qu'une guerre était sur le point d'éclater et il préférait ne pas prendre le risque d'être des fedayins sur son territoire », analyse le Palestinien sans se départir de son calme.

En 1974, il dirige les combats dans l'ouest de Beyrouth contre les troupes phalangiennes puis il se retrouve au Sud Liban où il s'opposera en vain à Abu Ammar (alias Arafat) qui veut cesser le feu contre Israël. Ses missions se poursuivent en Europe de l'Est. A Vassovic, il est victime d'un attentat du Mossad : sept balles dans le corps du visage de la taille. Il en réchappe miraculeusement.

Un seul État démocratique. Aujourd'hui Abu Daoud est rentré chez lui, en Cisjordanie. Au sein du Fatah à Ramallah, il est chargé de la surveillance et de la protection des membres du mouvement. Un poste sans poids réel : « La décision finale reste à Abu Ammar », admet l'homme aux grosses lunettes noires. A 61 ans, avec l'air d'un journaliste français (voir ci-contre), il a décidé de se pencher sur son passé en racontant son histoire et celle du mouvement palestinien. « Abu Daoud n'est pas un héros », c'est une vie en rapport avec les événements qui ont eu lieu dans cette région qui est intéressante. L'effort est courageux car les archives de jeunesse sont bien loin des réalités actuelles. Quant à lui, rejoint le Fatah, le mouvement revient à Shabab (jeune) et à la lutte pour la libération de la Palestine. « Nous sommes toujours là », déclare-t-il. « Nous sommes toujours là », déclare-t-il. « Nous sommes toujours là », déclare-t-il.

Samir Abu Sharar et Yannick Lainé



Abu Daoud et son double mètre : une silhouette reconnaissable entre toutes.

ressemble à un État de ce type. Les deux États, c'est une fausse bonne solution dans le contexte qui existe depuis maintenant dix ans, c'est-à-dire depuis que les islamistes sont redevenus une force politique importante dans la région. Dans la mesure où de l'autre côté, ils ont aussi leurs intégrités qui pèsent de plus en plus. Ceci ne peut conduire qu'à deux États théocratiques, sans régler les problèmes, notamment la question de Jérusalem. Si c'est la solution américaine, un n'a pas avancé mais régressé. Qui ce peut alors souscrire à l'idée d'un seul État laïc où il y aurait des juifs, des musulmans, des chrétiens ? Pour y arriver, il faut établir des étapes et dresser des ponts entre les uns et des autres. Il faudrait trouver dans cette région un type qui ait une grande idée et soit capable de transcender les frontières.

Propos recueillis par Yannick Lainé

Loisirs

Devant mon écran vidéo, je suis le roi

Comme partout ailleurs, la Jordanie n'échappe pas à la folie des jeux vidéo. L'été, en période de vacances scolaires, les salles de jeux situées dans les beaux quartiers de la capitale sont prises d'assaut. Un monde virtuel plus attrayant que la réalité.

Plus de 2200 mètres carrés d'explosions, de bagarres et de courses de voitures. La salle de jeux vidéo de Shabab à été l'une des premières à être créée. C'était en 1984. Depuis, elle accueille chaque jour des dizaines d'adolescents et de jeunes enfants accompagnés de leurs parents qui, pour 100 à 300 fils, viennent se plonger dans l'univers fascinant de l'animation. Concentrés sur leurs aventures mythologiques, ils semblent alors perdre toute notion de ce qui se passe autour d'eux. Tirés de comètes de fée, inspirés de romans ou encore issus des cerveaux toujours en effervescence de créateurs inventifs, les jeux électroniques offrent un espace d'évasion fabuleux.

Et c'est sans doute pendant l'été que ces salles sont le plus fréquentées. Avec les vacances scolaires, elles s'habillent de lumière et jouent sur la séduction des couleurs pour attirer une clientèle souvent novice pendant la période estivale. Pour Abu Dahab, le plus important propriétaire de salles de jeux de la région, celles-ci drainent désormais un large public, même si les Jordanien restent encore en retrait : « Depuis les années 90, les jeux vidéo sont devenus incontournables. D'abord adressés aux 8-15 ans, maintenant ils s'adressent aussi aux adultes : jeux d'aventure ou jeux de rôles avec des

personnages qui suivent un parcours extrêmement élaboré. Et puis il y en a pour tous les goûts ». Le phénomène est d'ailleurs plus renforcé que les gens s'équipent chez eux. Une récente enquête réalisée par le Centre des études sociales auprès de l'Université de Jordanie a montré qu'à Noël, les consoles de jeux vidéo occupaient la première place du marché du jouet. La Jordanie semble donc sur les traces d'un engouement planétaire avec des centaines de millions d'utilisateurs un peu partout dans le monde. Mohammad Jimadi est un joueur de 21 ans, fidèle des salles de jeux vidéo : « Heureusement, il existe maintenant des salles plus sophistiquées et équipées des nouvelles techniques. Je peux désormais y vivre mille aventures imaginaires », s'enthousiasme-t-il avant de nous décrire son plaisir quand il pratique son jeu préféré : « Pour une course de voitures, il suffit de s'asseoir derrière le volant face à l'écran et d'appuyer sur le bouton de départ pour se retrouver sur un circuit. Tous les sens sont alors sollicités. Le corps subit une accélération synchronisée avec le son et l'image et l'on sent la résistance et la force centrifuge dans le volant à chaque virage ». De la même façon, il est possible de faire du scooter des neiges et l'on ressentira les secousses des vagues. Si les courses de bo-

lides ont leurs amateurs, la majorité des jeunes joueurs préfèrent cependant les jeux violents. Exemples de transgression de la loi, ils leur permettent d'exprimer des émotions et des fantasmes plus ou moins avouables. Lutfi Hamzi, un étudiant de 21 ans à l'Université du Yarmouk, est ainsi un adepte de Mortal Combat. « Nous sommes alimentés dans notre société par le désir de défi et la recherche de la victoire, explique-t-il, car le chômage, le stress et l'instabilité de la situation sociale nous poussent à la violence ». Serri Nasser, professeur en sociologie à l'Université de Jordanie, confirme cette analyse : « Les adolescents se lancent dans des défis, accomplissent des exploits. Avant, ils admiraient leurs parents et s'efforcent de les imiter. En grandissant, ils cherchent d'autres modèles : stars du cinéma, du sport... De la nuit souvent un grand intérêt pour l'activité pratiquée par leur idole car ils vont pouvoir se prendre pour des héros. De même, en jouant aux jeux vidéo, les adolescents ont l'impression d'être des champions ».

Mais attention, si cette passion pour les jeux vidéo a un côté positif : enthousiasme, dépassement de soi, volonté d'apprendre, elle présente aussi un revers de la médaille : « Pris par son passe-temps, l'adolescent ne s'intéresse plus à autre chose. Son travail en pâtit, il ne prend plus le temps de communiquer. C'est aux parents d'être vigilants et de faire preuve à la fois de souplesse et de fermeté », souligne le sociologue. Enfin la neurologue Maha Khalil assure que les jeux vidéo développent les réflexes, la curiosité et l'esprit de déduction mais met en garde contre les

excès : « Si vous avez les symptômes de l'épilepsie en présence de stimulations lumineuses, consultez un médecin car certains jeux peuvent effectivement provoquer des crises. Tenez-vous le plus loin possible de l'écran, faites des pauses de 15 minutes après chaque heure de jeu et évitez de prendre le volant après une course de voitures imaginaires. Vous risquez de confondre la réalité et le monde virtuel ».

Youssef Abu Saleh

Quand les Occidentaux découvraient la civilisation

Les Croisades vues par les Arabes, roman historique d'Amin Maalouf (1985). En prêt au Centre culturel français.

Mettre les points sur les « ». Tel est le mérite du roman historique d'Amin Maalouf. En fait, ce livre s'adresse surtout aux Occidentaux, péris d'images d'Épinal sur la bravoure des croisés aux belles armures brodées de la croix chrétienne. Ici, on les découvre, barbares, sanguinaires, ignominieux, pilleurs, sans pitié et même auteurs arabes de l'époque, souvent interloqués par ces hordes de soldats et de civils qui dévastaient tout sur leur passage pour aller « libérer Jérusalem ». Cela sera fait en 1099, quatre ans après l'expédition du pape Urbain II pour la première expédition. La prise de la Ville Sainte s'accompagne de processions et... de massacres. Bref jusqu'à leur expulsion du Proche-Orient en 1291 par les Mamelouks, les croisés ne bénéficient guère d'une image séduisante auprès des intellectuels arabes. Historiens, commentateurs, témoins privilégiés de ces temps en proie aux troubles, tous essayent pourtant d'offrir un compte-rendu fidèle et objectif des rapports de force. Ainsi ils n'hésitent pas à dénoncer les luttes intestines entre les différents chefs arabes et salient à contrario l'intelligence d'un Nur Ed-din, le turc défenseur du jihad, ou la loyauté d'un Saladin. Au bout du compte, Amin Maalouf nous livre une fresque médiévale aux mille anecdotes, un voyage sur les traces des châteaux forts que l'on peut encore admirer aujourd'hui : le Krak des chevaliers en Syrie, Kérak, Shobak en Jordanie... Cependant, le récit se réduit trop souvent à une description didactique de batailles et de razzias et nous donne peu d'informations sur les modes de vie de cette époque bouleversée, où déjà, deux civilisations, l'Orient musulman et l'Occident chrétien, se rencontraient sans se comprendre.



Saladin enlève le château de Shobak aux croisés en 1189 après un siège d'un an et demi.

Le Journal

The Star Stadium

Edited by Abdul-Hamid Addasi

Al Faisali back on top again Tadrus's strike clinches the Jordan Cup



By Abdul-Hamid Addasi
Special to the Star

AMMAN—Jordan's Al Faisali beat its domestic arch rival Al Wihdat 2-1 last week to win the Jordan Cup final—the second of the season's four soccer championships.

Mansour Al Tawayha gave Al Faisali the lead in the 56th minute when he followed in on Ali Al Zubi's failed shot.

Al Wihdat drew level in the 75th minute when Rafat Ali too received a cross, from Munir Abu Hantash, and scored in an artistic way. While all spectators were expecting extra time, Al Faisali clinched the winning goal in the last minute. Jerius Tadrus, Al Faisali's striker—whose goal gave the national team the Pan Arab title last year—scored with a fierce shot.

Al Faisali has been waiting for the Cup title

for four years. They are Jordan's Cup record holders with nine previous titles, the last victory being in 1995. Al Wihdat scored five previous wins including the last two consecutive cups.

The Jordan Cup grouped 40 teams, representing the Premier League, and the first and second divisions. Al Wihdat currently lead the Premier League Championship and are looking for their 5th consecutive title.



The Orthodox Club celebrates a joint victory in the Jordanian Table Tennis league. Both the men's and women's team triumphed in the 1998 season

By Star Staff Writer

THE JORDAN Rugby Football Club returned from Cyprus this week in an upbeat mood, after their even better than expected performance in the International Rugby Tens Tournament, held at the Royal Air Force base in Akrotiri, Cyprus.

The tournament, held every year, brings together service teams from the Royal Air Force and Army—the majority of whom are based in Great Britain—along with international teams from around the world. This year's competition was made up of 24 teams, with Jordan, Romania and Sweden taking up the international challenge.

The game of Rugby Tens differs slightly from the normal 15-a-side game. As the name suggests, each team is made up of only 10 players, which means there is more space on the pitch for players to run. This leads to a faster and more gruelling game, and because the games are more intense, they are played over two 10-minute halves (as opposed to the normal 40-minute half in standard rugby).

During the first round of the tournament, Jordan was grouped with three other teams—the British Army (U21's, Military Survey and 2nd Battalion, Royal Anglians ('The Poachers')). In their first game, held last Monday, Jordan met the Army U21 team—the defending champions. Despite losing 24-7, Jordan took heart from their performance—later justified when the Army U21's went on to record 49-0 and 70-0 victories over the other two grouped teams.

The result was even more respectable, considering the fact that the Jordan team had arrived from Amman the same morning. On Tuesday, they began to play more as a unit, recording victories over the Military Survey and 'The Poachers', 14-10 and 21-0 respectively, which guaranteed them the runners-up position in their group and entry into the Plate Competition.

From the second round onwards it was a straight knockout format, and Jordan was drawn against RAF Lyneham. The game—held on Thursday—was a tense affair and was tied 5-5 in normal time. This meant 'sudden death' (when the teams continue to play; the team that scores first being the winners), and Jordan came out eventual victors 10-5.

That earned Jordan a semi-final place against RAF Brize Norton, held on Friday, but this proved to be the end of the line for them, losing a closely contested game 19-7. RAF Brize Norton went on to win the



Plate Competition, whilst the overall Cup winners were RAF (HQ) Strike Command.

All the matches were played in the late afternoon/early evening—with seasonal high temperatures of 40 degrees centigrade and 125% humidity, the fitness levels of all the players was severely tested. The main problem faced by the players came from sun-stroke and dehydration, and thankfully, injuries were restricted to one broken nose and a lot of grazed skin.

The Jordan team were well received by the organisers, players and spectators alike—all were happy to welcome a new rugby nation. As the team progressed through the tournament, the level of support increased, leading to a tumultuous farewell after the semi-final. The Jordan team were invited back for next year's tournament, with everyone hoping that maybe Jordan could go one better and make the final. All the members of the touring party expressed their appreciation to Mike Sedman (the Coach)

and to the organising committee for all their hard work in making the tour a reality.

The Jordan Rugby Football Club hopes to build on the team's performance in Cyprus,

and preparations are already under way for the next tournament—the Dubai International Rugby Sevens in late November. This will then be followed by Jordan's very own rugby tournament—the Prince Abdallah Trophy—in April 1999, with Cairo Rugby Club the current title-holders. The club is always on the look-out for new players—maybe with a larger pool of players to choose from and given the same amount of dedication to training, a great future is expected for rugby in Jordan.

For more information on the Jordan Rugby Football Club, contact either Farah Nushaiwat (Club Captain) on 4619074 or John Fenn at The

Star 5664153 Ext. 338

The Jordan RFC squad for the International Akrotiri Rugby Tens, Cyprus were: Nick Bonello, Nouri Al Faisali, Mohammad Faris, John Fenn, Richard Finch, Mohammad Jarrar, Yannick Laine, Farah Nushaiwat (Club Captain), Craig Pascoe, Craig Pocock, Nader Qusheir, Walter Renwick, Robert Sedman and Samer Zawati. Tour Physio-Debbie Robson.

Point Scorers: Tries - John Fenn (3), Nick Bonello (1), Richard Finch (1), Mohammad Jarrar (1), Nader Qusheir (1); and Robert Sedman (1). Conversions - John Fenn (7).

US routs Greece for bronze medal Yugoslavia defeats Russia to reclaim world championship



ATHENS—Yugoslavia rallied to beat Russia 64-62 for the gold medal and a record fourth world title.

Zeljko Rebraca had 16 points and 11 rebounds and hit two free throws with 4.7 seconds left to provide the winning margin for Yugoslavia in the championship game.

Dejan Bodiroga added 11 points and 5 rebounds and was chosen tournament MVP. He averaged 14.7 points and 4.9 rebounds over nine games. Sergey Panov and Igor Koudellin had 14 apiece for Russia, which settled for its second straight silver medal.

About 3,000 Yugoslav fans celebrated the victory in the arena, with several tossing flares after the final buzzer.

US 84 Greece 61

It wasn't a gold medal, but the US basketball team had to be satisfied with the bronze at the World Basketball Championship.

The Americans, a collection of CBA and European League players who weren't given much respect going into the tournament, finished third by beating Greece 84-61 on Sunday, led by Jason Sasser's 23 points. "We wanted

it today. You always set your goals for the gold," said US center David Wood, a former NBA journeyman who split last season between the CBA and Spain. "But this is the greatest accomplishment of my basketball career."

"We wanted to push the ball and run," coach Rudy Tomjanovich said. "Before the game we talked about what a great opportunity this was. One game to get a medal."

A loss would have sent the US team home from a world championship without a medal for the first time since the 1978 squad finished fifth. Dream Team II won the gold in 1994.

Still, the United States will have to go through qualifying to earn an invitation to the 2000 Olympics. Only the world champion and host Australia receive automatic bids.

But because of the NBA labor dispute, this US team was a ragtag collection cobbled together a month ago. The United States went on an early 25-6 run and took a 32-12 lead on a Jimmy Oliver jumper.

13:15 into the game, Greece was feared off the

court at halftime, trailing 48-27. It went scoreless for 5:39 minutes during one stretch. Sasser had 11 points early in the second half when the United States put the game out of reach.

The Americans took their biggest lead at 80-46 with 4:56 minutes left on a breakaway dunk by King, who was part of Michigan's Fab Five team and the CBA's MVP last season.

Greece, also fourth at the 1994 Championship, showed the after-effects of its hard-fought overtime semifinal loss to Yugoslavia Saturday night. "I think we had maybe the deepest team in the tournament," Wood said. "We're just as fresh today as we were at the start. I think the Greek stars were just fatigued from the heart-wrenching loss last night."

Supported by a sellout crowd of 18,000 at the Olympic arena, Greece was unable to keep up with the Americans. It shot 20-of-55 (36 percent) from the field for the game.

In consolation games, Spain beat Italy 64-61 for fifth place, and Lithuania defeated Argentina 77-76 for seventh.

Arsenal draws first blood as home crowd boos Beckham

LONDON—Double winners Arsenal drew first blood in the new English soccer season by beating Manchester United 3-0 in the Charity Shield at Wembley on Sunday.

The Premiership and FA Cup holders won the traditional curtain raiser thanks to goals by Dutch World Cup star Marc Overmars, Liberian striker Christopher Wreh and Frenchman Nicolas Anelka.

Winger Overmars broke the deadlock after 33 minutes when he seized on a loose ball in the area and crashed an unstoppable shot beyond United keeper Peter Schmeichel into the roof of the net.

Wreh came on for Dennis Bergkamp at halftime after last season's player of the year suffered a strained leg muscle, and within 10 minutes fired the Gunners into a 2-0 lead.

Man of the match, Overmars, and Anelka combined to find Wreh in space. His first effort was blocked by Schmeichel, but the rebound fell at his feet, and he turned neatly to roll his shot into the corner of the net.

Anelka, who will be Arsenal's principal striker this season following the departure of Ian Wright to West Ham, made sure of a handsome victory with the London club's third on 71 minutes. The young Frenchman burst into the left of the area and held off Dutch defender Jaap Stam. United's record 10-million pound (15 million dollars) signing, before firing a low left foot shot into the near corner.

A miserable afternoon for United in the blistering afternoon heat was made worse by the crowd abuse received by midfielder David Beckham, who was making his first appearance on home soil since his sending off in England's World Cup encounter with Argentina in St Etienne just under six weeks ago. Beckham has been the subject of a hate campaign after many fans blamed him for England's exit from France '98, and any hopes that the Gunners fans might be in a forgiving mood were quickly shattered. Right from the kickoff, Beckham was relentlessly booed every time he touched the ball, and any mistake was greeted with jeers.



Match Facts

Arsenal vs Manchester United

3-0

Half-time: 1-0

Scorers: Marc Overmars 34, Christopher Wreh 57, Nicolas Anelka 72

Attendance: 67,342

Teams:

Arsenal: 1-David Seaman, 2-Lee Dixon, 6-Tony Adams (5-Steve Bould 79), 14-Martin Keown, 3-Nigel Winterburn, 4-Patrick Vieira (18-Gilles Grimandi 84), 15-Ray Parlour, 17-Emmanuel Petit (21-Luis Boa Morte 73), 9-Nicolas Anelka, 10-Dennis Bergkamp (12-Christopher Wreh 46), 11-Marc Overmars (16-Stephen Hughes 69)

Manchester United: 1-Peter Schmeichel, 2-Gary Neville, 5-Ronny Johnson, 6-Jaap Stam, 3-Denis Irwin, 7-David Beckham, 8-Nicky Butt (20-Ole Gunnar Solskjaer 53), 16-Roy Keane (21-Henning Berg 79), 18-Paul Scholes (10-Teddy Sheringham 70), 9-Andy Cole (12-Phillip Neville 70), 11-Ryan Giggs (14-Jordi Crivill 70)

Tel. 566

Jordan: JD 2

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THE STAR'S WORK COMPUTING & HIGH TECH

Edited by Zeid Nasser

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Microsoft responds to inquiries on the Windows NT 5.0, and the future of desktop computing: Take Win 98 now? Wait for NT 5.0?

IN ANTICIPATION of Windows NT 5.0, users have a multitude of questions and inquiries about the future.

Steve Ballmer, recently appointed as CEO of Microsoft (after being executive vice president for many years) speaks to the media on matters related to NT 5.0. Here are some excerpts, from a number of interviews, which should be very useful in answering user inquiries:

What is Microsoft's expected delivery date for Windows NT 5.0?

NT 5.0 should ship 'roughly' around December 1998, but the company discussed exact availability. Some analysts expect NT 5.0 to arrive in early 1999.

What new features can be expected within Windows NT 5.0?

NT Workstation 5.0 is essentially a superset of Windows 98. The most eagerly awaited features include Active Desktop, power management and Plug & Play. NT Server 5.0 includes Active Directory and new automated software installation features.

Will Windows 98 "die" when NT 5.0 ships?

No. Windows 98 and NT 5.0 will co-exist for the foreseeable future. That's because many businesses require Windows 98's

extensive Win 16 support. As a Windows 3.x user, should the next step up be Windows 95, Windows 98, NT 4.0 or NT 5.0? It depends on when you plan to migrate. If you must upgrade today, choose NT 4.0 on two conditions: You should have 32MB of RAM and your software and peripherals should support NT. If you delay an upgrade decision, till late 1998, choose NT 5.0 provided you meet the previous conditions too. Otherwise, choose Windows 98.

As a Windows 95 user, what should be the next step up? Should it be Windows 98, NT 4.0 or NT 5.0?

Current Windows 95 users should delay an upgrade decision until NT 5.0 is available. As a general

rule, skip Windows 98 and go to NT 5.0 if your hardware, software and peripherals support.

What are the minimum hardware requirements needed to run NT 5.0?

Generally speaking, it runs on a 486-based processor with 16MB of RAM, though a Pentium processor with 32MB of RAM offers much better performance. Digital Alpha processors are also supported.

What's new in Windows NT 5.0? What hardware/software does NT support?

The vast majority of Windows NT 4.0 hardware and software will very likely work with NT 5.0. To find out whether or not a computer system works with NT 4.0, it is advised to check out Microsoft's NT Software and NT Hardware compatibility pages.

Does NT 5.0 run on RISC hardware?

NT 4.0 supports three RISC platforms: Digital Alpha, MIPS and PowerPC. However, NT 5.0 supports Alpha hardware, as Microsoft has dropped MIPS and PowerPC development, because NT wasn't selling well on those platforms.

Microsoft

Global One & Arabia.On.Line's service gets going:

www.baladna.com

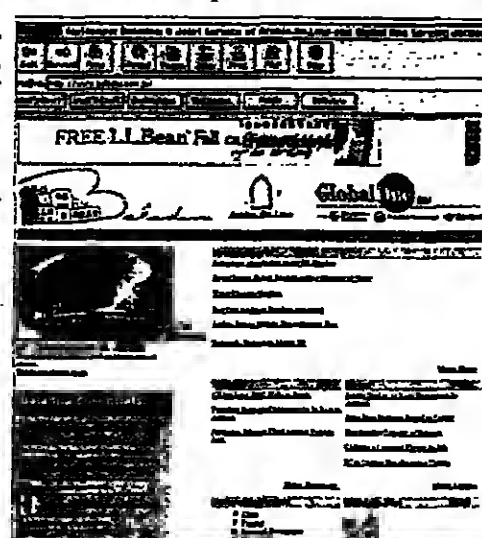
ARABIA.ON.LINE and Global One are soon to "officially" launch Baladna, the on-line information service for Jordanians at home and abroad.

Baladna is online media, community and e-commerce service. Baladna, available to all Global One subscribers, as an added value service. For non-Global One users, Baladna can also be accessed for a limited period by simply signing onto the Web site. Later, it will be required that users subscribe to Baladna/Global One.

The service will give Jordanians the opportunity to utilize a comprehensive virtual world on the Internet through a pioneering project covering all aspects of life including news, entertainment, business, and much more.

Baladna will provide news coverage and hourly updates on current affairs in Jordan and the region.

Through its Jordan Channel, Baladna will provide news as it happens without the usual delays of print media. A professional editorial staff backed by the know-how of the editorial department of Arabia.On.Line will be in charge.



This includes theater attractions, a TV guide, lectures, social activities and so forth.

Among Baladna's main attraction is a community service complete with forums, chatting capability as well as a Hajjaj Message Board. Users will also be able to build homepages and create their own micro-communities.

The Hajjaj Message-board will be maintained by Jordan's most famous cartoonist. An interactive channel will be open with the artist so that users can give feedback, ideas and access to an archive service of the famous caricatures that have been taking Jordan by storm.

The third aspect of the Baladna world is the commerce edge, another unique feature. Baladna will make shopping on the Internet a reality for the first time in the local Jordanian market.

In the initial stage, Baladna's e-commerce will be linked to Arabia.On.Line's Shopping Channel, Arabiashop, giving users a host of merchandise from a wide list that includes books, CDs, hardware and software and many more.

A classifieds service would also be included to give users the interactive touch of the electronic community. Arabia.On.Line and Global One will conduct a major study in this regard to further develop this pioneering service. Baladna is now functional on a test-basis and can be viewed at www.baladna.com.

Information includes stock quotes, hotels, rent-a-car outlets and many other services. The Living section of the media service will keep interested parties in touch with the latest in the entertainment arena in Jordan.

UMAX introduces PowerLook III scanner

UMAX HAS introduced a new scanner, the PowerLook III, targeted at users in the fields of graphic design, desktop publishing and general imaging applications.

The PowerLook III is a 42-bit color scanner, with an optical intensity (DMax) of 3.4. It can be used to scan transparencies, slides and glittering pictures, in addition to negative films. An impressive new development is that the scanner can handle 12 slides at one

time, thanks to an auto-scan technology. The scanner comes with software including Magic Scan 3.1, PhotoPerfect and Live Picture. The PowerLook III utilizes Byte Enhancement Technology (BET), and it works with Windows 95, 3.1, NT and Macintosh. For further information, contact AJ Nashir Technical Services, local UMAX distributors, or check out the www.umax.com on the Internet.

INTERFACE

BY ZEID NASSER

Another view on piracy

SOFTWARE PIRACY remains a hot topic in Jordan, especially as the practice of piracy in this country reaches higher proportions. Although anyone who believes in fairness understands that software piracy is illegal, immoral and harmful to the software industry. For a change its worth examining the opinion of those who have a "softer view" regarding piracy. We don't have to agree with them, but it makes some sense to hear the different views.

Now, we need to clarify a couple of points. Software pirates have always made up excuses for their practices. We are not interested in their excuses, because they are the ones profiting from lax copyright laws and they have much to lose from proper application of copyrights (intellectual property rights laws).

Instead, listening to some academics, social or economic researchers may yield a couple of interesting points.

Due to the simple fact that Jordan is classified as a third world country, regarded as a 'poor country' (in the sense that gross domestic product per capita is low and the country is in debt...etc); it would be fair to assume that Jordanians cannot purchase original software.

If deprived of the knowledge related to software use, Jordanians would become computer illiterate and the country would loose out on the skills necessary to stimulate economic development and possible prosperity.

To put it plainly, let's assume that every engineer had in buy his or her copy of AutoCAD for around \$2,000; how many engineers in Jordan would know how to use the software?

Although training centers could be set up for the purpose of providing access to tens or hundreds of engineers in AutoCAD training; the prices asked for such training courses would be ten times as much as they are today.

Those who have such views, speak of the need to balance between what they refer to as the 'national interest' and intellectual property rights. They believe that there has in a trade-off. They require concessions on the part of software publishers.

How? Well, a suggested method is to produce cut-down versions of software, which are sold for a quarter or so of the price of the actual package. By producing special software editions, only to be sold in the Middle East, software publishers will make a reasonable profit while local users will have the financial means to purchase new, advanced software because it is priced much lower!

Another method is to secure a wide donation and free sample strategy, by which all schools, universities and research institutions receive free or very, very low priced software. Educational software, in particular, sparks many views in this regard, because Jordanians cannot be left behind in today's global economy. So, many believe that their is a 'chain reaction' involving different segments of Jordanian society, which would be affected by the relatively high cost of acquiring software.

Several comments regarding the issue of piracy center around the fact that there are, still, very high piracy rates in countries like the United States, Britain, France and Japan; reaching, in some cases, 40 percent. So, why are they out to get pirates in developing countries when they should be taking care of their piracy problems back home?

Well, because piracy is wrong regardless of where it takes place. As far as software publishers are concerned, if they can cut down piracy by as little as 15 percent in the Middle East, it could mean millions of dollars of revenue saved from the clutches of software pirates.

After all, we all agree that piracy is a form of theft! So, nothing can excuse software piracy. We need to remember that Arab software publishers also suffer from piracy. The issue of piracy is rather complex, but it is always worth seeing the varied views of parties involved.

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RETURN



Kristen Davis, star of the television series "Melrose Place" arriving as a guest at the premiere of "Return to Paradise".

Photos from Reuters

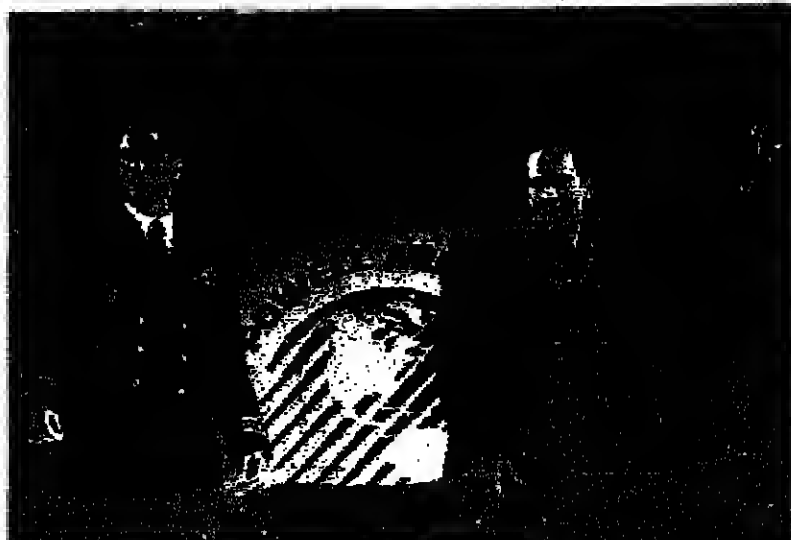
"Return to Paradise", 10 August, in Los Angeles.

friendship when vacationing tourists are arrested

per reporter who has uncovered the story of the

States August 14.

'Snake Eyes': A bad bet



By Rita Kempley

NICOLAS CAGE, who sported wings as a somber seraphim in this spring's "City of Angels," returns in more devilish pursuits in Brian De Palma's "Snake Eyes." A glittery but under-the-hood murder mystery set in Atlantic City's Trump Taj Mahal, the movie gives both of these high-rollers a chance to strut and preen.

Cage, swaggering like a pimp and spitting out quips with maniacal glee, plays on the rafters. As an unrepentant con on the take, Cage's Rick Santoro finds himself in a quagmire of false leads and untruths when a limelight-loving politico is plugged on his turf.

Corruption, conspiracy and just plain paranoia are among the movie's many themes, which can be said of just about any film De Palma ever made. But it most resembles the director's "Blow Out," which similarly deconstructs the events that lead up to a fictional shooting from multiple points of view.

The technique was pioneered in "Rashomon" by Akira Kurosawa, one of the many directors who have influenced De Palma's narrative style. He's virtually lifted a couple of Hitchcock's movies and Antoon's "Blowup," and since Coppola's "The Conversation" was a source for "Blow Out," hail, hail, the gang's all here.

Like that 1981 thriller, this yarn centers on a politically motivated killing and the protagonist's attempt to determine whodunit by reviewing recorded evidence. Here, the high-



Film director Brian De Palma.

profile murder, which takes place during a championship fight, is caught by several of the arena's cameras. In addition to the tapes, Santoro makes use of the casino's extensive surveillance system and manpower to track down a pair of eyewitnesses in the shooting of the secretary of defense who are hiding somewhere in the building. Unfortunately, the humans are undermined by the technology of storytelling with which De Palma remains obsessed.

Basically De Palma blows his wad on a continuous, 20-minute opening that takes in everything from the hurricane gusting outside the gambling establishment to the crime scene unfolding within.

After this dazzling demonstration of the filmmaker's virtuosity, Cage is the only show in town. In a shiny suit and a Don Ho shirt, he makes the most of the fast-talking, cheerfully unrepentant Santoro. He feels entitled to the bribes he collects from the

hookers, hustlers and other lowlifes who work the casinos. A man of many vices, Santoro must redeem his virtues while investigating the shooting.

His antics entertain, but they aren't enough to keep audiences interested in his sketchy character and the prosaic, implausible plot by De Palma and screenwriter David Koepp ("Jurassic Park").

Among those witnessing the event are Santoro's best friend (Gary Sinise), a dour naval officer in charge of the secretary's security; a mercurial heavyweight champ (Stan Shaw); a buxom redhead at ringside; and a stunning whistleblower (Carla Gugino) who works for a defense contractor.

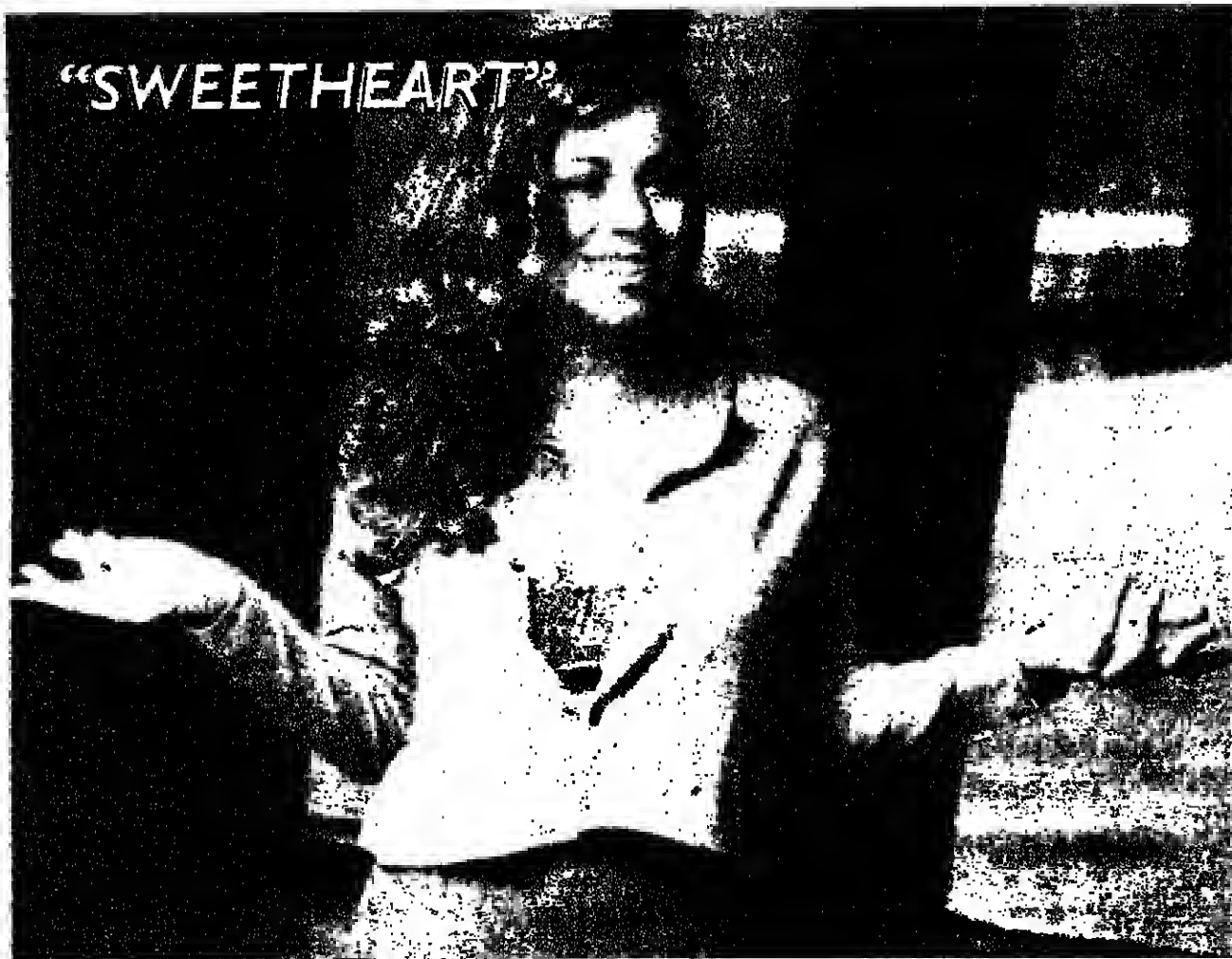
Sinise's character is sidetracked by the redhead, and who wouldn't be? when the shooting occurs, so Santoro tries to cover up his friend's lapse of duty. Gugino plays a rocker scientist who sends word of a conspiracy to the secretary by e-mail. Duh.

Sinise, Shaw and Gugino are surprisingly good considering all are obliged to play characters who do not exist in nature. As the motivations ascribed to their actions become ever more illogical, "Snake Eyes" seems the perfect title for this crapshoot.

"Snake Eyes" (99 minutes) is rated R for language and violence.

LA Times-washington Post News Service

"SWEETHEART"



U.S. singer Mariah Carey talks to the photographers as she waits for filming to start on her new video, 10 August. Carey has chosen the location of Bilbao's Guggenheim Museum for the video of her latest song "Sweetheart."

Photos from Reuters



A Nepali witch doctor (l) performing a traditional dance on the streets of Kathmandu, with his female partner (r) working. Witch doctors, locally known as Bhadrakali, treat the sick and wounded in most small villages using skills they claim have come to them from a divine power. The witch doctor often visits the capital to offer their expertise to various people in an attempt to keep their special powers.

ROLLING STONES IN MOSCOW



The Rolling Stones' Mick Jagger and Keith Richards walk in front of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, after the band's performance. The band have allowed their names to be used in the museum's name.

Tony's shop...
ton's tele...
dancing with...
world.